INDIAN PALÆOGRAPHY

RAJ BALI PANDEY, M. A., D. Litt.

E,1492

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नाकरिष्यद्यदि ब्रह्मा लिखितं चक्षुरुत्तमम् ।
तत्रेयमस्य लोकस्य नाभविष्यत् शुभा गतिः ॥ नारद

[Had not the Creator invented the art of writing, the best of eyes, the world could have never attained to its happy condition.]

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INDIAN PALÆOGRAPHY

PART I

BY

RAJ BALI PANDEY, M. A., D. Litt.
Professor of Ancient Indian History & Culture,
Banaras Hindu University

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PREFACE

The palæography of a country is one of the most facinating and instructive studies. It deals with the art of writing, which, during the march of civilization, distinguished man from animal and provided the former with an instrument for conservation, augmentation and transmission of racial traditions from generation to generation. The art of writing was one of the momentous inventions which have shaped the destiny of man, because it has proved the most stable medium of the propagation of knowledge and the diffusion of human culture. It is highy desirable that a history of such an art, dealing with its origin and evolution, should be made available for the proper appreciation of human struggle for knowledge.

A book on Indian palæography incorporating recent researches and giving a new orientation to the subject in their light was long overdue and hence the present venture hardly needs an apology. Since the time of G. Bühler (1896) and Mm. Pt. Gaurishankar Hirachand Ojha (1918) a large number of new discoveries have taken place. Excavations at Mohenjodaro and Harappa were of a revolutionary character and the specimens of palæography unearthed there have greatly affected the problems of the antiquity and he origin of writing in India. Several other discoveries, though less revolutionary, have also influenced various notions about the art of writing in India. A huge mass of additional materials have accumulated in course of time through the Department of Archæology in India and private efforts. This has necessitated the revision and completion of the subject of Indian palæography as a whole. Since the time of Ojha no serious endeavour has been made for writing a comprehersive book on Indian palæography. A gap of more than thirty years in this direction has really become intolerable. The present work is just an humble attempt towards filling this gap with an earnest hope that it will be improved upon in near future.

The present work aims at giving a continuous but succinct history of the art of writing in ancient India up to c. 1200 A. D. For the sake of convenience the work has been divided into two parts. Part I, which is being published first, contains the discussions of various problems and aspects of Indian palæography essential for properly following the course of the evolution of the art of writing in India. The topics dealt with in Part I are :

I. Antiquity of the Art of Writing in India.
II. Types and Names of scripts used in Ancient India.
III. Origin of Indian Scripts.
IV. History of the Decipherment of Ancient Indian Scripts.
V. Writing Materials.
VI. Profession of Writing and Engraving.
VII. Technique of Writing.
VIII. Types of Records.
IX. Palæographical Formulæ.
X. System of Dating and Eras used.

Necessary tables are provided at the end. While dealing with these problems the author had to reconsider and revise a number of theories so far current regarding the art of writing in India, in the light of a fuller picture of India's past unravelled by researches subsequent to the times of the early writers. Besides, he has attempted the reconstruction of some new aspects of the subject. Part II contains charts and tables arranged in chronological and regional order preceded by sections dealing with their analysis involving formation, derivation and interpretation of characters used in different periods of Indian history. In the following pages an attempt has been made to reduce the scattered mass of materials to a system and to bring the subject up to date by supplying additional information and bringing out new aspects for treatment.

Author's indebtedness to various writers and agencies are acknowledged in the foot-notes. He is grateful to Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Dr. A. S. Altekar and Dr. R. S. Tripathi for many

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Banaras Hindu University
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Raj Bali Pandey

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CHAPTER I.

ANTIQUITY OF THE ART OF WRITING IN INDIA.

The history of the art of writing in India, like the history of ancient India in general, is still in a melting pot, and a number of divergent and conflicting views are held on it. This state of affairs is mainly due to many lacunae in ancient Indian history and the scarcity of materials on the subject for study. It is not possible here to enter into the details of various theories. It is proposed to deal with the problem as briefly as possible.

1. The Views of some early Orientalists.

Some of the early orientalists of Europe obsessed with the comparative newness of European civilization and the theory of the Aryan invasion of India in the second millennium B.C. and due to the paucity of evidences at their disposal, were inclined to fix the beginning of the art of writing in India rather late and they were not prepared to go beyond the first millennium B.C.

(1) Max Müller, one of the earliest orientalists, opines, "I maintain that there is not a single word in Pāṇini's terminology which presupposes the existence of writing".[1] According to him Pāṇini flourished in the fourth century B.C. Thus, the art of writing, in his opinion, started in India even later than the fourth century B.C.

(2) Burnell, another European orientalist, held the view that the Indian script Brāhmī was derived from the Phœnician script and it was introduced in India not earlier than the fourth or the fifth century B.C.[2]

[1] *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 262; the great scholar overlooked the fact that a work on developed grammar itself presupposes the art of writing. For terms denoting writing see *infra* p. 11.

[2] *South Indian Palæography*, p. 9; the hollowness of this view will be shown when dealing with the problem of the origin of the Indian scripts.

(3) Dr. Bühler, who was better equipped than the first two scholars to write on the history of Indian Palæography, tracing the origin of the Brāhmī script fixes the date of its introduction in the following words: "As, according to the results of the preceding enquiry, the elaboration of Brāhmī was completed about B.C. 500, or perhaps even earlier, the *terminus a quo*, about B.C. 800, may be considered as the actual date of the introduction of the Semetic alphabet into India. This estimate is, however, merely a provisional one, which may be modified by the discovery of new epigraphic documents in India or in the Semetic countries. If such a modification should become necessary the results of the recent finds induce me to believe that the date of introduction will prove to fall earlier, and that it will have to be fixed perhaps in the tenth century B.C., or even before that".[1]

The above views were expressed either in the nineteenth century or in the beginning of the twentieth one. Since then a new mass of materials has become available on ancient Indian history, which has changed the views of historians about it. New works on the history and antiquity of Sanskrit language and literature, the discovery of the Indus Valley script, new light on the Middle East and its relationship with India and on the original home of the Aryans have tended to push back the origin of Indian civilization and with it the origin of the art of writing.[2]

[1] *Indian Palæography* (Eng. Tr.), p. 17.

[2] Even the latest European writer on Indian palaeography David Diringer in his book, '*The Alphabet*' (1949), p. 334, mostly relying on the researches of the early European Orientalists, maintains, "On the whole, many different lines of evidence suggest a date between the eighth and the sixth century B.C. for the introduction of writing into "Aryan" India, thus confirming the conclusion that the Brāhmi script was much later than the Indus Valley writing and that the knowledge of writing flourished from the seventh century B.C. onwards".

2. The Traditions of the Country.

In contradistinction with the views of the most of European scholars, Indian traditions claim a very high antiquity for the art of writing in India. A few of Indian traditions are given below :

(1) The *Nārada Smṛti*, a work on ancient Hindu Law and assigned to the 5th century A.D., while dealing with the importance of writing, states, "Had not *Brahmā*, the Creator, created the written (literature), the best of eyes, this world could have never attained to its happy condition".[1] The only inference which can be drawn from this tradition is that the Indians in the fifth century A.D. believed that the art of writing was invented with the early development of literature and it was regarded essential for the progress of the world.

(2) *Bṛhaspati* refers to the same tradition, though in slightly different words :

"Because in a period of six months memory is confused regarding a particular thing, in very early times the Creator produced letters depicted on leaves".[2] According to this statement the art of writing evolved very early in the history of the Indians to help their memory and for the conservation of literature. This statement also maintains that the earliest and the most common writing material in India consisted of leaves available in abundance.

(3) The greatest Sanskrit poet *Kālidāsa* gives his considered opinion on the utility of learning the art of writing in the following words :

[1] नाकरिष्यद्यदि ब्रह्मा लिखितं चक्षुरुत्तमम् ।
तत्रेयमस्य लोकस्य ना भविष्यत् शुभा गतिः ॥
Sacred Books of the East Series, XXIII, 58ff; see also *Bṛhaspati's Vārtika* on *Manu*, ibid. p. 304.

[2] षाण्मासिके तु समये भ्रांतिः संजायते यतः ।
धात्राक्षराणि सृष्टानि पत्रारूढाण्यतः पुरा ॥
Quoted in the *Āhnika-tattva*.

"By the proper grasp of the art of writing one reaches the vast treasure of literature, as one approaches the ocean through the mouth of a river".[1] Against European presumption that the early Indian literature was handed down orally without the help of writing from one generation to the other, Kālidāsa regarded this art essential for the proper study of literature.

(4) The Jain works, *Samavāyāṅgasūttra*[2] and *Paṇṇavanā-sūttra*,[3] and the Buddhist work *Lalitavistara*,[4] like the Brahmanical ones, refer to the tradition of the high antiquity of writing in India.

(5) The literary traditions regarding the antiquity of writing in India are supported by the art traditions of the country also. In a sculptural representation of *Brahmā* found at Badami, he holds in one of his four hands a bundle of palm-leaves, denoting a book.[5] Similarly, the counter part of *Brahmā*, *Sarasvatī*, is always conceived with one of her hands decorated with a book.[6] Thus both the deities associated with the beginning of knowledge and literature are also associated with written books in their hands.

3. Foreign Traditions.

They support the Indian traditions. Scholars in China and Western Asia were conversant with Indian traditions regarding the invention and antiquity of the art of writing in India.

(1) The learned Chinese traveller *Hiuen Tsang* refers to the very early invention of writing in India.[7]

(2) The Chinese encyclopaedia *Fa-Wan-Shu-lin* states that the *Brāhmī* script written from the left to the right

[1] लिपेर्यथावद्ग्रहणेन वाङ्मयं नदी मुखेनेव समुद्रमाविशत् ।
Raghuvaṁśa, III. 28.

[2] Weber, *Indische Studien*, 16, 280, 399. It is assigned to c. 300 B.C.

[3] Ibid. It is assigned to c. 168 B.C.

[4] Chapter X.

[5] *Indian Antiquity*, Vol. VI, 366; the date of sculpture is 580 A.D.

[6] वीणापुस्तकरञ्जितहस्ते । भगवति भारति देवि नमस्ते ॥

[7] Beal, *Si-yu-ki*. I. 77.

was invented by *Fan (Brahmā)* and it was the best of the scripts.[1]

(3) The Arab scholar *Alberuni*, referring to the antiquity of writing in India says, "The Hindus once had forgotten the art of writing, and that through a divine inspiration it was rediscovered by *Vyāsa*, the son of *Parāśara*. According to him the history of Indian alphabets would begin with the Kaliyuga, in B.C. 3101". This tradition got currency due to the fact that *Vyāsa* is believed to be responsible for the collection of the *Vedas* and the composition of the *Mahābhārata* and the eighteen *Purāṇas*.[2]

4. Evidence of the Greek Writers.

Some Greek writers, who either accompanied Alexander in his invasion of India or visited it afterwards, have recorded their observations regarding the art of writing and the material used for it in India of the fourth and the third century B.C.

(1) Nearchos,[3] one of the generals of Alexander, who accompanied him in the Punjab and led his retreating army up to the mouth of the Indus and thus observed Indian life, records that 'the people of this place know the art of manufacturing paper out of cotton and tattered clothes (certainly for writing purposes)'.

(2) Megasthenes,[4] who stayed at *Pātaliputra* (Patna) from 305 B.C. to 299 B.C. as a Greek ambassador to the Mauryan court writes in his *Indica* that 'in India mile-stones are fixed on the roads at an interval of ten stadia to know the distance between the rest houses' for the use of the travellers, who were expected to be literate. He also refers to the customs of relating '*Varṣaphala*' (good or evil prospects of the year) according to an almanac (which could be prepared only with the help

[1] *Babylonian and Oriental Records*, I. 59.
[2] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I. 171.
[3] Strabo, XV. 717.
[4] *Indica of Megasthenes*, 91, 125-126; C. Müller, *Fragm. Hist. Graec.* 2, 421.

of writing), preparing of the horoscopes of individuals and delivering of judgment on the basis of (written) *Smṛtis*. Unfortunately Megasthenes uses the word 'memory' for 'Smṛti' which has been misconstrued by some to indicate that the *Smṛtis* were only remembered and not written. This view has been, however, refuted by Bühler[1] who maintains that by 'memory' Megasthenes meant Smṛti literature and not remembrance.

(3) Another Greek writer Q. Curtius[2] mentions soft inner bark of certain trees as a writing material. This suggests the fact that the birch-bark *(Bhūrjapatra)* was utilised for writing very early in India.

5. Evidence of the Buddhist Literature.

The first stratum of the early Pali literature was collected and composed, without any doubt, before Alexander's invasion of India and it records some aspect of contemporary history and reflects even history of times before the fifth and sixth century B.C. This literature contains definite references to the existence of the art of writing, the profession of writing, the contents of writing, and the methods and materials used for it.

(1) The *Suttānta*, while giving the sermons on the conduct of the *Bhikkhus*, includes *Akkharikā*, a game, in the list of things forbidden for them.[3] The game *Akkharikā (Aksharikā)* was played by children. In this game one had to recognize letters written with fingers either on one's own back or in the sky.'[4] Monks were further restrained from incising the rules which induce people to gain heaven, riches and fame in the life after death through self-mortification.[5]

(2) Works included in the *Vinayapitaka* praise the art of writing *(lekhana)* as innocent and commendable for

[1] *Indian Palæography*, p. 6.
[2] Mac Crindle, *History of Alexander's Invasion of India*. VIII, 9.
[3] *Suttānta*. I. 1.
[4] *Brahmajāla-Sutta*, 14; *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, 49.
[5] *Vinayapiṭaka*, *Pārājika* Section (3, 4, 4).

monks.[1] For house-holders and their sons the profession of a writer was regarded as a good means of livelihood.[2]

(3) The *Jātakas* refer to the art of writing in the following contexts :

(i) Letters private and official.[3]
(ii) Royal proclamation.[4]
(iii) Family affairs.[5]
(iv) Moral and political maxims.[6]
(v) Usury and bonds *(iṇapaṇṇa)*[7] and
(vi) Manuscripts *(pattraka)*.[8]

(4) The *Mahāvagga*[9] and the *Jātaka*[10] not only prove the existence of writing before the fifth century B.C. in India but they also refer to the existence of institutions where this art was taught, to the contents of writing on the subject taught and to the methods and material used for it. The *Mahāvagga* mentions *lekha* (writing), *gaṇanā* (arithmetic) and *rūpa* (applied arithmetic with special reference to coins), which constituted the curriculum of the ancient Indian primary schools. The *Jātaka* mentions *phalaka* (wooden writing-board) and *varṇaka* (wooden pen) as writing materials. A later work, the *Lalitavistara*,[11] describes how Buddha went to the *lipiśālā* (a school where writing was taught) and how his teacher Viśvāmitra taught him letters on a writing-board of sandle wood and with a golden pen.

[1] *Bhikkhupāchittiya*, 2. 2.
[2] Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 108.
[3] *Kaṭāhaka Jātaka* ; *Kāma Jātaka*.
[4] *Ruru Jātaka*.
[5] *Kaṇha Jātaka*.
[6] *Kurudhamma Jātaka*.
[7] *Ruru Jātaka*.
[8] Bühler, *Indian Studies*, III[2]. 120.
[9] 1. 49 ; *Bhikkhupāchittiya*, 65. 1.
[10] *Katāhaka Jātaka*.
[11] Chap. X.

All Buddhist evidences clearly indicate that the art of writing was well known and widely spread in India in the period between the fourth and the sixth century B.C. and that it was not something new and it must have been preceded by a long period of the evolution of this art. The view of Bühler[1] that the terms used for writing in the Buddhist literature—*chindati*, *likhati*, *lekha*, *lekhaka*, *akkhara* and also all the writing materials—wood, bamboo, *paṇṇo* (leaves), *suvaṇṇapaṭṭa*—refer to the primitive character of writing, that is, incision of the signs on hard materials is not tenable. Really speaking there is only one word in the whole list, *chindati*, which can suggest incision, which was mostly done in monumental writing on stone. Incision was, no doubt, applicable to hard leaves, e.g., *tālapatra* (palm-leaves); but *bhūrjapatra* (birch-bark) was like paper and letters were written on it with ink. Moreover, the Greek writers[2] of the fourth century B.C. mention the manufacture of paper in India which was used for writing with ink. Even on hard materials, for practice, writing work was done with something liquid, ink or chalk solution. The art of writing during the period under consideration had passed beyond its primitive character and was practised with ease and fluency with suitable materials.

6. Evidence of the Brahmanical Literature.

Later classical Sanskrit literature, consisting of epics, *Kāvyas*, dramas, *Smṛtis*, works on polity and morals, stories, philosophy and works on technical subjects, contain ample proofs regarding the art of writing in India, by the nature of their contents, style and volume and also by specific references to actual writing. The most of them are, however, posterior to the age of the Aśokan inscription and, therefore, their evidence is not pertinent to the problem of the earlier existence of writing in India. As opposed to the later Sanskrit literature, the evidence of the early Sanskrit literature is very valuable. The part of this literature was contemporary of the early Buddhist literature; but mostly it preceded

[1] *Indian Palæography*, p. 5.

[2] Nearchos (Strabo, XV. 717); Q. Curtius (Mac Crindle, *History of Alexander's Invasion of India*, VIII. 9).

the rise of Buddhism. To the pre-Buddhist Brahmanical literature Max Müller[1] arbitrarily assigned the period between B.C. 800 and B.C. 1400. The later writers on the history of the Sanskrit literature like Bühler[2] and Winternitz,[3] on the considerations of the political, social and cultural development of India, have pushed back the earliest limit of that literature in the third or the fourth millennium B.C. So the relevant evidences on writing from the early Brahmanical literature will considerably extend the antiquity of the art of writing in India.

(1) The two Great Epics of India, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, which can be assigned to the period earlier than the fourth century B.C.,[4] though certain interpolations were added to them later on, contain a number of terms pertaining to writing, *likh*, *lekha*, *lekhana*, *lekhaka*, etc. On this Bühler[5] opines, "Though the testimony of the Epics can, therefore, only be used with due reserve, yet it is undeniable that their terms regarding writing and writers are archaic". In the introduction of the *Mahābhārata* it is said that *Vyāsa*, the author of the Epic, used *Gaṇeśa*, obviously a human being expert in writing, as his scribe.[6]

(2) Another important Brahmanical work, the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya[7], which belongs to the fourth century B.C. and is earlier than the Aśokan inscriptions, contain direct and specific references to writing . Some of them are given below :

(i) वृत्तचौलकर्मा लिपिसंख्यानं चोपयुञ्जीत । I. 5. 2.
(Having gone through the tonsure ceremony, one should learn writing and counting).

[1] *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature.*
[2] Quoted by Winternitz in his *History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I.
[3] *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I. p.
[4] *Ibid.* Vol. I.
[5] *Indian Palæography*, p. 4.
[6] Ādiparva, I. 112.
[7] He was the chancellor of Chandragupta Maurya in the fourth century B.C.

(ii) पञ्चमे मन्त्रिपरिषदा **पत्रसम्प्रेषणेन** मंत्रयेत । I. 19. 6.
(In the fifth the king should consult his council of minister through letters).

(iii) संज्ञालिपिभिश्चारसञ्चारं कुर्युः । I. 12. 8.
(With signs and writings he should send his spies).

(iv) अमात्यसम्पदोपेतः सर्वसमयविदाशु**ग्रन्थश्चार्वक्षरो लेखवाचनसमर्थो लेखकः** स्यात् । II. 9. 28.
(The writer.........should be prompt in composing, elegant in writing and able in reading documents).

(3) The *Sūtra* literature,[1] consisting of the *Śrauta*, the *Gṛhya* and the *Dharma Sūtras*, has been assigned to the period between the second and the eighth century B.C. This also yields evidences on the wide currency of writing. To take an example, the *Vaśiṣṭha Dharmasūtra*[2] mentions written documents as one of legal evidences, and even one of the *Sūtras* on the topic of evidences is quoted from some still earlier work or from some older tradition.

(4) Early works on Sanskrit grammar, which belong to the *Vedāṅga* class of Sanskrit literature and can be assigned to the early *Sūtra* period, not only presuppose the existence of writing, as no developed systems of grammar, phonetics and philology can be evolved without the help of writing,[3] but also contain terms which indicate the existence of writing during their age.

(i) The *Aṣṭādhyāyi* of *Pāṇini*[4] contains the following terms denoting the existence of the art of writing :[5]

[1] Winternitz : *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I.

[2] XVI. 10. 14-15.

[3] No dialect or language of the world, without a knowledge of script, has been known to possess a codified grammar.

[4] According to Max Müller (*History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*) and Bühler *Pāṇini* flourished in the fourth century B.C. Gold Stucker, on the basis of wide researches, fixed the date of *Pāṇini* in the eighth century B.C., which is more reasonable.

[5] It is really surprising that Max Müller presumed that there is not a single word in the terminology of Pāṇinī, indicating writing. See ante, p. 1.

(a) *Lipi*[1] and *Libi* (script)
(b) *Lipikara*[2] (a writer or scribe)
(c) *Yavanānī*[3] (Greek script)
(d) *Grantha*[4] (a book)
(e) *Svarita*[5] (a mark in writing)

Pāṇini further refers to the marking of the ears of cattle with the signs of figures 5 and 8 and also with religious symbols like *Svastika* 卐 and others.[6] The mention of the *Mahābhārata* as a *grantha*[7] (leaves of a book fastened together) and the names of the earlier writers[8] on grammar, *Apiśali*,[9] *Kaśyapa*,[10] *Gālava*,[11] *Gārgya*,[12] *Chakravarman*,[13] *Bhārdvāja*,[14] *Yāska*,[15] *Sākalya*,[16] *Sākaṭāyana*,[17] *Senaka*,[18] *Sphotāyana*[19] are also found in the *Aṣṭādhyāyi*, which shows that writing on grammar had already

[1] लिपिलिबि बलि 13. 2. 21. In the opinion of Bühler "*Dipi* and *Lipi* are probably derived from the old Persian *Dipi*, which cannot have reached India before the conquest of the Punjab by Darius about B.C. 500, and which later became *Lipi*". (*Indian Palæography* p. 5; Bühler, *Indian Studies*, III. 21 D). This view presupposes borrowing on the part of Pāṇini and drags him down to the fourth century B.C. In view of Pāṇini's date fixed by Goldstücker, Bühler's opinion does not hold good. As regards the derivation of the word '*Lipi*', Bhanuji Dikshita, while commenting upon the Amara-Koṣa लिपिलिबि रुभे स्त्रियौ II. 8. 16) writes लिप्यते। लिपि उपदेहे। इक् कृष्यादिभ्य (वा. ३।३।१०८) इगुपधात् कित् (उ. ४।१२० इतीनवा)। लिवि सौत्रौ धातुः इति मुकुटः। and gives a Sanskrit derivation for the both *Lipi* and *Libi*.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] 4. 1. 49; *Kātyāyana* explains it 'यवनलिप्याम्'; *Pataniali* comments, 'यवनलिप्यामिति वक्तव्यम्, यवनानी लिपिः।

[4] समुदाङ्भ्यो यमोऽग्रन्थे। I. 3. 75; अधिकृत्यकृते ग्रन्थे। 3. 87; 4. 3. 116.

[5] स्वरितेनाधिकारः। I. 3. 11.

[6] कर्णे लक्षणस्याविष्टाष्टपञ्चमणिभिन्नछिन्नछिद्रस्रुवस्वस्तिकस्य। 6. 3. 115.

[7] 6. 2. 38.

[8] 6. 1. 92.

[9] 1. 2. 25.

[10] 6. 3. 61.

[11] 8. 3. 20.

[12] 6. 1. 130.

[13] 7. 2. 63.

[14] 2. 4. 63.

[15] 8. 3. 19.

[16] 3. 4. 111.

[17] 5. 4. 112.

[18] 6. 1. 123.

begun before *Pāṇini*, necessitating the use of script.

(ii) *Yāska*,[1] who flourished earlier than *Pāṇini*, and wrote his *Nirukta* on etymology of words, includes among his predecessors the following names: *Audumbarāyaṇa*, *Agrāyaṇa*, *Aurṇavābha*, *Aupamanyava*, *Gārgya*, *Gālava*, *Kāṭṭhakya*, *Kautsa*, *Charmaśiras*, *Taitiki*, *Maudagalya*, *Varṣyāyani*, *Śakalya*, *Śatabalākṣa*, *Śakaṭayāna*, *Śākapuri* and *Sthaulasthin*. This series of names pushes back the date of technical works on language to a still higher antiquity and with it the antiquity of writing.

(5) The *Vedāṅgas*[2]-*Śikṣā* (the science of correct pronunciation), *Kalpa* (ritual procedure of litany), *Nirukta* (etymology), *Vyākaraṇa* (grammar), *Chhandas* (prosody) and *Jyotiṣa* (astronomy)—all branches of technical knowledge, implying classification, systematisation, cross-references, repetition, big calculations including multiplication, division etc. necessarily presuppose the art of writing.

(6) The *Upaniṣads*, which form a still earlier layer of the Brahmanical literature, furnish references to *akṣaras* (letters).[3] These letters are mentioned not only as pronounced but also as written, as they are associated with suffix '*Kāra*' (something to be made) and with *Varṇa* (something to be coloured or painted).[4] In some of the *Upaniṣads*[5] *Varṇa* (written letters) and *Mātrās* (medial signs) are mentioned together.

(7) In some of the *Araṅyaka*[6] we find minute differentiation between *Ūṣman* (sibilants), *Sparśa* (mutes), *Svara* (vowels) and *Antastha* (semi vowels); between *Vyañjana*

[1] The *Nirukta* of *Yāska*.

[2] They constitute the most ancient technical literature of India.

[3] हिंकार इति त्र्यक्षरं प्रस्ताव इतित्र्यक्षरं तत्समम् । *Chhāndogva* II. 10.

[4] *Chhandogva*. I. 13; II. 22.3.

[5] वर्णः स्वरः मात्रा बलम् । *Taittiriya*, I. 1.

[6] *Aitareya*. III. 2. 1; II. 2. 4; III. 2. 6; III. 1. 5.

(consonants) and *Ghoṣa*; between *Mūrdhanya* (cerebral) and *Dantya* (dental). We also come across discussion on *Saṁdhi* (joining of letters). The formation of *akṣara* (letter) ॐ is explained as a combination of letters *a*, *u* and *m*.

(8) The major portions of the *Upaniṣads*, the *Āraṇyakas* and the *Brāhmaṇas* are composed in prose and they form a huge volume of philosophical and ritual literature. It is absurd to believe that this stupendous mass of literature, mostly composed in prose, was handed down from generation to generation without any aid of writing. It is just possible that some portions of this literature was remembered. But even for teaching and remembering a written text was needed. Besides, this literature contains a large number of technical terms on grammar, etymology, prosody etc. which could not be used by illiterate people.

(9) Even when we approach the earliest layer of the Brahmanical literature, the *Vedas*, there are certain evidences to show that the authors of the Vedas were familiar with the art of writing. In the *Ṛgveda*[1] we get internal references to the names of the meters—*Gāyatri*, *Anuṣtubha*, *Bṛhati Virāja*, *Triṣṭubha*, *Jagatī* etc. In the *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*[2] we find the names of some additional meters like *Paṅkti*, *Dvipada*, *Tripada*, *Chatuṣpada*, *Ṣaṭpada*. The *Atharvaveda*[3] gives the number of meters as eleven. The names of meters and the technical terms regarding their composition could not have been evolved by illiterate people. The modern primitive races and even the lower strata of the literate races compose songs and sing them heartily, but they cannot name their meters nor do they know the technical side of prosody. Only that section of the literate community, which is acquainted with the bulk of the literature of

[1] X. 14. 16; X. 132. 3. 4.
[2] *Yajurveda*, *Vaj. Samhitā*, XI. 8; XIV. 19; XXIII. 33; XXVIII. 14.
[3] VIII. 9. 19.

the race and has the power of observation and analysis, can develop the art of prosody.

The Vedic literature also refers to high figures involving the knowledge of written arithmetic. According to the *Ṛgveda*[1] King Sāvarṇi gave one thousand cows in alms, on whose ears figure eight was imprinted. The *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*[2] of the *Yajurveda* includes '*Gaṇaka*' (an astronomer) in the list of people enumerated in connection with the *Puruṣamedha*. As regards the figures we get the following in ascending order: *daśa* (10), *Śata* (100), *Sahasra* (1,000), *ayuta* (10,000), *niyuta* (1,00,000), *prayuta* (10,00,000), *arbuda* (1,00,00,000), *nyarbuda* (1,00,00,000), *samudra* (1,00,00,00,000), *madhya* (10,00,00,00,000), *anta* (1,00,00,00,00,000) and *prārdha* (10,00,00,00,00,000).[3] The *Brāhmaṇa* literature contains a large number of instances, dealing with high figures.[4] The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[5] gives minute divisions of day and night. According to it one day and night consists of 30 *mūhurtas*, one *muhurta* of 15 *kṣipras*, one *kṣipra* of 15 *etarhis*, one *etarhi* of 15 *idānims*, one *idānim* of 15 *prāṇas*. Thus one day and night contains $(30 \times 15 \times 15 \times 15 \times 15) = 1518750$ *prāṇas* and one *prāṇa* will be equal to about 1/17 of a second. Illiterate communities or persons are not capable of counting or knowing such high figures and the minutest division of a day. They generally count in the multiples of 4, 5, 16, 20 etc., hardly going up to 100. The figures found in the Vedic and the *Brahmaṇa* literature necessarily imply the existence of writing.

Now the question may be asked: If writing existed so early, why is not a single specimen of it found before the fifth century B.C. in India? The answer is that only monumental

[1] सहस्रं मे ददतो अष्टकर्ण्यः । X. 62. 7.

[2] ग्रामण्यं गणकमभिक्रोशकं तान्महसे । XXX. 20.

[3] *Taittiriya Samhitā*, IV. 40. 11. 4; VII. 2. 21. 1.

[4] *Pañchavimśa Brāhmaṇa*, XVIII. 3; *Śatapatha* Br. X. 4. 2. 22-25.

[5] *Śatapatha*, XII. 3. 2. I.

writing engraved or incised on hard materials like stone or metal can survive long centuries. All available survivals of early writing found in India are those on stone. Early Brahmanical literature and books were written on leaves, birch-bark and later on handmade paper. Such frail and perishable materials could not be preserved for a long time; old manuscripts were discarded after some time and they were copied afresh for transmission to the new generation. Through this process even script was changing from time to time.

The system of education in ancient India which laid emphasis on learning personally from the mouth of the teacher[1] and remembering the texts has been misconstrued to suggest that the art of writing was unknown in the time when early Brahmanical literature was composed. The religion and belief of the ancient Hindus required that the Vedas should be correctly pronounced; the wrongly pronounced speech would kill the *yajamān*.[2] It could be done only through a teacher, who could recite the *Vedas* correctly, and not from a manuscript; but it does not prevent the possibility of a written copy of the *Vedas* with the teacher for his own reference or consultation. Some of the teachers and reciters used written texts at the time of teaching and reciting, which was not regarded honourable for them.[3] No doubt that, even in the case of secular literature, the Hindus emphasised that the texts should be memorised,[4] as in their opinion the mastery over a subject implied that an expert in a particular subject should not depend upon written texts for his ready reference. But at the time of composing the books writing was used and after they were ready, they could be memorised by the authors for their own personal use and also for transmission to students with perfect ease and freedom.

[1] यदेषामन्यो अन्यस्य वाचं शाक्तस्येव वदति शिक्षमाणः। *Ṛgveda* VII. 103. 5.

[2] दुष्टः शब्दः स्वरतो वर्णतो वा मिथ्या प्रयुक्तो न तमर्थमाह।
स वाग्वज्रो यजमानं हिनस्ति यथेन्द्रशत्रुः स्वरतोऽपराधात्॥
Pātañjali-mahābhaṣya, I

[3] गीती शीघ्री शिरःकम्पी तथा लिखितपाठकः।
अनर्थज्ञोऽल्पकण्ठश्च षडेते पाठकाधमाः॥ *Yāiñavalkya-Śikṣā*

[4] पुस्तकस्था च या विद्या परहस्तगतं धनम्।
कार्यकाले तु सम्प्राप्ते न सा विद्या न तद्धनम्॥ *Chāṇakyanīti.*

It will not be out of place to quote the opinions of some competent authorities on early Brahmanical literature. Bothling[1] in his English introduction to the edition of the *Mānava Kalpa-sūtra* prepared by Goldstücker says that in his opinion, though writing was not used for propagation of literature (which was done orally), it was employed at the time of composing new works. Roth[2] was of a definite opinion that the art of writing must have existed very early in India, because the works like the *Prātiśākhyas* of the Vedas could not be composed without its help: Bühler[3] writes, "......there is nothing to bar the conjecture, repeatedly put forward, that even during the Vedic period, manuscripts were used as auxiliaries both in oral instruction and on other occasions. And, an argument in favour of this conjecture, it is now possible to adduce the indisputable fact that the Brahmī alphabet has been formed by phonologists or grammarians and for scientific use".

7. Positive Evidence.

The conclusions drawn from the traditional, literary, circumstancial and inferencial evidences are supported by positive evidences in the forms of inscriptions, writing engraved or incised on permanent materials, stone, metal, earthen tablets, ivory, stealite etc., which have survived the long centuries intervening between them and the present time, while their contemporary works written on perishable materials like leaves, bark and paper have perished.

(1) *The Mauryan Inscriptions.*[4] The indisputably datable specimens of writing are found in the inscriptions of Aśoka, belonging to the third century B.C. They are engraved in two main scripts of the country—*Brāhmi* and *Kharoṣṭhi*—on rocks, pillars of stone and the walls of caves. The inscriptions are distributed over a wide area from the Himalayas in the north to

[1] p. 69.

[2] Quoted by Ojha, *Pāchina Lipimālā.* p. 15.

[3] *Indian Palæography*, p. 4.

[4] Hultzsch. *Aśokan Inscriptions, C. I. I.*, Vol. I.

the state of Mysore in the south and from Girnar in Kathiawar (West) to Dhauli and Jaugada in S.E. The palæography of these inscriptions is marked by the following characteristics :

(i) *Wide variations in the forms of letters.* The majority of letters have different forms obviously developed in different times and localities and by different persons in course of time. For instance letter '*A*' has ten forms.

(ii) *Local varieties.* Broadly speaking there were two main varieties—northern and southern—but other regional sub-varieties are also traceable.

(iii) *Cursive and advanced forms of letters.* The same letter possesses a monumental (mostly angular and carved with great care, paying full attention to its aesthetics) form and at the same time a cursive (having a tendency towards curves written in a hurry as in personal and day-to-day writing) one. This is possible only when a script is intimately familiar on account of its long use which prevents confusion regarding the identification and recognition of different forms. Besides, we get advanced forms of letters, which mean that the letters were changing in their basic forms due to evolutionary causes.

From these characteristics Bühler[1] drew the following conclusion : "The existence of so many local varieties, and of so very numerous cursive forms, proves in any case that writing had a long history in Aśoka's time, and that the alphabet was then in a state of transition". That several centuries were required for the development of the scripts which were used in the Aśokan time is a fact which is accepted by all. This fact is further reinforced by the internal evidences contained in the Aśokan inscriptions which prove that writing was employed not only for monu-

[1] 1 *Indian Palæography*, p. 7.

mental or spare use but was also used for writing extensive books on common and softer materials, necessitating a long practice of writing. Aśoka, while explaining the medium of stone for his edicts says, "so that it may last long"[1], implying thereby that writing work was done on perishable materials also. He also prescribed a number of religious texts for daily perusal and recital by monks and laity[2]. These works were, certainly not engraved on stone but written on common materials, leaves, bark or paper.

(2) *Pre-Mauryan Inscriptions.* There are some legends and inscriptions which belong to a period earlier than that of Aśoka and which carry the date of writing back to pre-Aśokan times. They can be referred to as follows :

(i) *The Eran coin legend.*[3] The legend runs from the right to the left, on the basis of which Bühler[4] maintained that it belonged to the period, when *Brāhmi* was written both from the right to the left and from the left to the right and this period must be earlier than the fourth century B.C. Though it is not safe to assert that there was a period when *Brāhmi* was written from the right to the left on the basis of sporadic and fragmentary pieces of writing, on the ground of the archaic characters of letters used in the legend (*Sha*, *ma*, *sa*) and numismatic considerations the legend is earlier than the Aśokan inscriptions.

(ii) *Bhattiprolu relic-casket Drāvidi inscriptions.*[5] They can be assigned to a date earlier than that of Aśokan inscriptions on the basis of (1) liquid characters of

[1] इयं धंमलिपि लेखिता चिलठितीका होतु । RE. II. (Kalsi).

[2] इमानि भंते धंमपलियानानि विनयसमुकसे अलियवसानि अनागतभयानि मुनिगाथा मोनेयसूते उपतिसपसिने ये चा लाघुलोवादे मुसावादे……।

Bhabru R.E. of Aśoka.

[3] Cunningham, *Ancient Coins of India*, p. 101.

[4] *Indian Palæography*, p. 8.

[5] Bühler : *Indische Palæographie* Plate II, Cols. XIII-XIV.

some of its letters (*da*, *dha*, *bha*), (2) archaic nature of some letters (*cha*, *ja*, *ṣa*) and independent forms of two of its signs (*la and ḷa*).

(iii) *Taxila coin Brāhmī legends.*[1] On palæographic and numismatic grounds they are placed in the fourth century B.C.

(iv) *The Mahāsthāna stone plaque inscription.*[2] This inscription was found in the Bogra district of Bengal and records an endowment to the Pañcha-vargīya Buddhist monks.

(v) *The Sohgaura copper-plate inscription.*[3] It was found in the Gorakhpur district of U. P. and records a provision of grains and fodders during famines.

(vi) *The Piprahwa Buddhist vase inscription.*[4] It was found in the Basti district of U. P. It records the dedication of a relic-casket containing the portion obtained by the *Śākyas* out of the remains of *Buddha* and it can be assigned to c. 483 B.C., the date of Buddha's Nirvāṇa.

(vii) *The Baḍli inscription.*[5] It was discovered in a village of the Ajmer district. It contains the inscription *Vīrāya Bhagavate chatusite vase* (dedicated to Lord (Mahā) Vīra in his 84th year. By calculation we get (527-84) 483 B.C. as the date of this inscription.

On the basis of above positive evidences the age of writing is pushed back to the fifth century B.C. presupposing a previous long development of scripts. These epigraphs are almost contemporary of the early Buddhist literature.

[1] Cunninghan, *Coins of Ancient India.*

[2] *Ep. Indica*, XXI, P. 85; *Indi. Hist.* Quart, 1934, p. 57 ff.

[3] *Ep. Indica*, XXII, p. 2; Ind. Hist. Quart. X. 54 ff.

[4] *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*,1898, p. 387 ff.

[5] Ojha, *Prāchīna Lipimālā*, p. 2. It is preserved in the Rajputana Museum, Ajmer.

(3) *The Indus Valley Script.*[1] Before the discovery of the Indus Valley Script in 1921 the palaeographists in India stumbled on the pre-Mauryan inscriptions and could not go beyond the fifth century B.C. But the momentous discovery referred to above gave a rude shock to the complacent conception of the chronology of ancient India which was supposed to start in the middle of the second millennium B.C. On the consideration of stratifications and comparison between the Sumerian and Indus Valley civilizations the age of the Indus Valley culture and with it that of its script is fixed in the fourth millennium B.C. at the latest, with the possibility of its being pushed back still further. It is not necessary to discuss here whether this script was indigenous or imported.[2] This will be done in the chapter dealing with the origin of scripts in India. But this much can be said here that the absence of the discovery of monumental writing between the sixth century B.C. and the age of the Indus Valley culture cannot be construed to suggest that the art of writing was unknown in India during that period.[3] The beginning of the earliest Vedic literature, which contains evidences on writing, and the rise of the Indus Valley culture, were contemporary. Both the evidences

[1] Sir John Marshall, *Mohenjo-daro and Indus Civilization*, Vol. II. Mackay, *The Indus Civilization.*

[2] There is no sound argument to prove that this script was imported. The traditions of Sumeria, which is supposed to be the source of the Indus Valley script, themselves maintain that writing with the arts of agriculture and metalworking went there from sea-side (Wolley, C.L., *Sumerians*, p. 189). The possibility of the derivation of the Brāhmi script from the Indus Valley script has been suggested by some competent authorities on the subject (Hunter, *The Script of Harappa and Mohenjodaro and its connection with other Scripts*, Kegan Paul, London, 1934, p. 49).

[3] Numerous mounds in northern India, which cover the ancient culture of the land have not been excavated as yet. Unless it is done, it will be highly presumptuous to emphasise the negative evidence unduly.

combined strongly indicate the existence of writing in the fourth millennium B.C. in India.

Thus the traditions of the country, the testimony of foreign writers, literary evidences and positive palæographical survivals all tend to prove a very high antiquity of the art of writing in India, stretching in the past upto the fourth millennium B.C. The earliest specimens of writing in India can be regarded contemporary of those found in Sumeria, Egypt and Elam.

CHAPTER II.

TYPES AND NAMES OF SCRIPTS USED IN ANCIENT INDIA.

The earliest mention of the word for 'script' *(Lipi* or *Libi)* is found in the *Aṣṭādhyāyi*, a work on grammar written by Pāṇini in c. B.C. 800.[1] But how many types of script were current in the country and what were their names, there is nothing in *Pāṇini* to answer these questions. *Pāṇini* mentions only one script by name, *Yavanāni* (Greek script), the existence of which was known to him. He did not, however, find any occasion to mention Indian scripts, which were a bit too familiar with him. The *Arthaśāstra*[2] of *Kauṭilya* also refers to 'script' *(lipi)* as one of the subjects to be taught to a child prince, but nothing further is known from it. The inscriptions[3] of *Aśoka* contain the words '*Lipi*', '*Libi*' and '*Dipi*' all meaning 'Script'. At least two types of script—*Brāhmī* and *Kharoṣṭhī*—were prevalent in the time of *Aśoka*, but their names are nowhere mentioned in his edicts. It is when we come to the Jain *Sūtras*[3]—the *Pannavaṇāsutra*, the *Samavāyāṅgasūtra* and the *Bhagavatīsūtra*, the names of various scripts are presented to us. The first two contain a list of eighteen scripts and the last one refers to only one, *Brāhmī*.[4]

The eighteen scripts are listed as follows:

1. *Baṁbhī* (=*Brāhmī*),
2. *Javanāli* or *Javaṇāliya* (Greek script),
3. *Dosapuriya* (or *Dosapurisa*),
4. *Kharotthi (Kharoṣṭhī)*,
5. *Pukkharasariyā*,
6. *Bhogavaiyā*,
7. *Pahārāiya* (or *Paharaiyā*),
8. *Uya-aṁtarikkhiyā (Uyamitara Kariya)*,

[1] III. 2. 21.

[2] 2. I. 2.

[3] These Sūtras are later than the Brahmanical Sūtras.

[4] नमो बंभीये लिविये (Salutation to the Brāhmī Script).

9. *Akkharapiṭṭhiyā (Akkharapuṁṭṭhiyā)*,
10. *Tevanaiyā* (or *Veṇaiyā*),
11. *Gi (ni?) nhaiyā* (or *ṇhiṇattiyā*),
12. *Aṁkalivi* (or *Amkalikkha*),
13. *Ganitalivi* (or *Ganiyalivi*),
14. *Gamdhavva-livi*,
15. *Ādamsalivi* (or *Āyasa-livi*),
16. *Māhesari* (or *Māhassari*),
17. *Dāmili* (=*Dravidian*) and
18. *Polimdi* (=*Paulindi*, belonging to the *Pulindas*).

The Buddhist work, '*Lalitavistara*'[1] has preserved a much bigger list than that contained in the Jain *Sūtras*. The names of the scripts mentioned in the *Lalitavistara* are given below:

1. *Brāhmī*,
2. *Kharoṣṭhī*,
3. *Puṣkarasāri*,
4. *Aṅgalipi*,
5. *Vaṅgalipi*,
6. *Magadhalipi*,
7. *Maṅgalyalipi*,
8. *Manuṣyalipi*,
9. *Aṅguliyalipi*,
10. *Śakārilipi*,
11. *Brahmavallilipi*,
12. *Draviḍalipi*,
13. *Kanārilipi*,
14. *Dakṣiṇalipi*,
15. *Ugralipi*,
16. *Samkhyālipi*,
17. *Anulomalipi*,
18. *Ūrdhva-dhanurlipi*,
19. *Daradalipi*,
20. *Khasyalipi*,
21. *Chīnalipi*,
22. *Hūṇalipi*,
23. *Madhyakṣara Vistāralipi*,
24. *Puṣpalipi*,
25. *Devalipi*,
26. *Nāgalipi*,
27. *Yakṣalipi*,
28. *Gandharvalipi*,
29. *Kinnaralipi*,
30. *Mahoragalipi*,
31. *Asuralipi*,
32. *Garuḍalipi*,
33. *Mṛgachakralipi*,
34. *Chakralipi*,
35. *Vāyumarulipi*,
36. *Bhaumadevalipi*,
37. *Antarikṣalipi*,
38. *Uttarakurudvīpalipi*,
39. *Uparagauḍalipi*,
40. *Pūrvavidehalipi*,

[1] It is a work written in Sanskrit and deals with the biography of Lord Buddha. It is not possible to fix its date exactly. But as it was translated in the Chinese in 308 A.D., it must belong to a time at least one or two centuries earlier.

41. *Utkṣepalipi*,
42. *Nikṣepalipi*,
43. *Vikṣepalipi*,
44. *Prakṣepalipi*,
45. *Sagaralipi*,
46. *Vajralipi*,
47. *Lekhapratilekhalipi*,
48. *Anudrutalipi*,
49. *Śāstrāvartalipi*,
50. *Gaṇāvartalipi*,
51. *Utkṣepāvartalipi*,
52. *Vikṣepāvartalipi*,
53. *Pādalikhitalipi*,
54. *Dviruttarapada-Sandhilikhita-lipi*,
55. *Daśottarapada Sandhilikhita-lipi*,
56. *Adhyāhāriṇilipi*,
57. *Sarvarutsamgrahaṇilipi*,
58. *Vidyānulomalipi*,
59. *Vimiśritalipi*,
60. *Ṛṣitapastaptalipi*,
61. *Dharaṇiprekṣaṇalipi*,
62. *Sarvausadha-niṣyandalipi*,
63. *Sarvasārasaṁgrahaṇilipi* and
64. *Sarvabhutarudgrahaṇilipi*.

The above lists contain the names of scripts, Indian and foreign, known to, or imagined by, the Indians during the periods when these lists were complied. Out of the whole lot only two scripts can be identified on the basis of positive evidence. These two are the Brāhmī and the Kharoṣṭhī. The Chinese Encylopaedia *Fa-Wan-Su-Lin* (composed in 668 A.D.) helps us in this connection. According to it the invention of writing was made by three divine powers; the first of these was *Fan* (*Brahmā*), who invented the Brāhmī script, which runs from the left to the right; the second divine power was *Kia-lu* (*Kharoṣṭha*) who invented Kharoṣṭhī, which runs from the right to the left, and the third and the least important was *Tsam-ki*, the script invented by whom runs from the up to the down. The Encyclopaedia further informs us that the first two divine powers were born in India and the third in China. The instances of the first two types of writing were found at the same period in the inscriptions of Aśoka. Two of his rock edicts, found at Mansera and Shahbazgarhi, running from the right to the left were obviously written in the Kharoṣṭhī Script[2]. The rest of his edicts, running from the left to the right were certainly written in the Brāhmī[3], which was almost universally current in the country. On account of

[1] *Babylonian Oriental Record*, I. 59.

[2] Hultzsch: *Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. I.

[3] Ibid.

their wide currency in India, the *Brāhmī* and *Kharoṣṭhī* *were* given prominent place in the lists.

On a close observation the majority of the scripts can be divided under the following groups, though some of them still defy recognition and identification:

1. *The most current writing in India*: *Brāhmī.* It was an alphabetic system of script.
2. *The writing confined to the north-west part of India: Kharohṣṭī.* It used the same alphabets as the Brāhmī, but its characters were different.
3. *Foreign scripts known in India:*
   (1) *Yavanāli* (*Yavanāni*)=Greek. Through commerce the Indians were acquainted with it. It was also used in the legends on the Indo-Bactrian and the Kuṣaṇa coins.
   (2) *Daradalipi* (the script of the Darada people)
   (3) *Khasyalipi* (the script of the Khasas=the Śakas)
   (4) *Chiñalipi* (the Chinese script)
   (5) *Hūṇalipi* (the script of the Hūṇas)
   (6) *Asuralipi* (the script of the Asuras—the cousins of the Aryans in W. Asia)
   (7) *Uttarakurudvīpalipi* (the script of the Uttara Kurus beyond the Himālayas)
   (8) *Sāgaralipi* (Oceanic scripts)
4. *Provincial scripts of India.* Like modern provincial scripts of India, there must have been provincial scripts current side by side with the *Brāhmi*, either its varieties or derivatives or derived from the proto-*Brāhmī* or some independent scripts. Except the variants of the *Brāhmī* all other perished in course of time. Yet among the following names some of them survive:
   (1) *Pukharasāriya* (*Puṣkarasāriya*). Most probably it was a script prevalent in Western Gāndhara, the capital of which was *Puṣkarāvatī.*
   (2) *Pahāraiya* (the script of the northern mountainous regions)

(3) *Aṅgalipi* (the script of Anga—N.E. Bihar)
(4) *Vaṅgalipi* (the script prevalent in Bengal)
(5e *Magadhalipi* (the script current in Magadha)
(6) *Draviḍalipi* (Damili) (the script of the *Draviḍa-pradeśa*)
(7) *Kanārilipi* (the Canarese script)
(8) *Dakṣiṇalipi* (the script of the Deccan)
(9) *Apara-Gauāḍdi-lipi* (the script of western *Gauḍa*)
(10 *Purva-Viḍeha-lipi* (the script of E. Videha)

5. *Tribal scripts* :
(1) *Gandharvalipi* (the script of the *Gandharavas*, a Himalayan people)
(2) *Polindi* (the script of the *Pulindas*, a Vindhyan people)
(3) *Ugralipi* (the script of the *Ugras*)
(4) *Nāgalipi* (the script of the *Nāgas*)
(5) *Yakṣalipi* (the script of the *Yakṣa*, a Himalayan people)
(6) Kinnaralipi (the script of the *Kinnaras*, a Himalayan people)
(7) *Garuḍalipi* (the script of the *Garuḍas*)

6. *Sectarian scripts* :
(1) *Mahesarī (Mahessari=Māheśvarī*; a script current among the *Śaīvas*)
(2) *Bhaumadevalipi* (a script used by the gods on the earth = the *Brāhmaṇs*)

7. *Pictographic scripts* :
(1) *Maṅgalya-lipi* (an auspicious script)
(2) *Manuṣyalipi* (a script representing human figures)
(3) *Aṅgulīyalipi* (script resembling fingers)
(4) *Ūrdhva-dhanulipi* (a script resembing a drawn bow)
(5) *Puṣpalipi* (a flowery script)
(6) *Mṛgachakralipi* (a script forming circles of animals)
(7) *Chakralipi* (a circular script)
(8) *Vajralipi* (a script resembling a bolt)

8. *Mnemonic scripts* ;
   (1) *Aṅkalipi* (or *Saṁkhyālipi*)
   (2) *Gaṇitalipi* (some kind of arithmetical writing)
9. *Engraved or incised script* :
   (1) *Ādaṁśa* or *Āyasalipi* (literally bitten, that is, chiselled, incised or drilled with the help of an iron instrument)
10. *Styiish scripts* :
   (1) *Utkṣepalipi* (scripts thrown upwards)
   (2) *Nikṣepalipi* (scripts thrown downwards)
   (3) *Vikṣepalipi* (scripts elongated on all sides)
   (4) *Prakṣepalipi* (scripts exaggerated on one side)
   (5) *Madhyakṣara-vistaralipi* (scripts exaggerated in the middle)
11. *Transitional scripts* :
   Vimiśritalipi (scripts representing a mixture of pictographs, syllabries and alphabets)
12. *Shorthand or Dictation* :
   (1) *Anudrutalipi* (fast or shorthand writing)
13. *Special style for books* :
   Śāstrāvarta (monumental scripts used in writing standard works)
14. *Special style for Accounts* :
   (1) *Gaṇāvarta* (some kind of mathematical scripts)
15. *Supernatural or imaginary* :
   (1) *Devalipi* (the script of gods)
   (2(*Mahoragalipi* (the script of serpants)
   (3) *Vāyumarulipi* (the script of winds)
   (4) *Antarikṣadevalipi* (the script of the gods of the sky)

Excepting supernatural or imaginary scripts, other varieties and types of scripts have their representatives in different parts of India, in the neighbouring countries, in provincial characters and in other pictographical and decorative styles of writing.

The archæological excavations at Harappa and Mohenjodaro revealed the existence of a system of writing prevalent in India

in the fourth millennium B.C. On the basis of the positive evidences this is the earliest system of writing current in India. It is a mixed (*Vimiśrita*) writing of the transitional period between the age of embryonic writing and the age of phonetic writing. It consists of pictograph, ideographs and syllabus (corresponding to various names given in the lists referred to above).

CHAPTER III

ORIGIN OF INDIAN SCRIPTS

Both the Indian and the Chinese traditions are unanimous on the point that the two main scripts of India—the Brāhmī and the Kharoṣṭhī—were invented in India. But, as before the discovery of the Indus Valley script, no specimen of writing belonoing to the period between the fifth century B.C. and the fourth millennium B.C. was found in India, and the positive evidevces on writing for this period were discovered in Western Asia, many scholars, believing in the monogenic nature of writing, attributed the origin of the Indian scripts to some country in Western Asia or to Greece. Some scholars maintained and some are still of the opinion that at least the Brāhmi is of indigenous origin. The Kharoṣṭhī has been almost unanimously regarded as of a foreign origin imported from Western Asia. As regards the origin of the Indus Valley script, the scholars are again divided in their opinion and a number of theories have been propounded in this connection. In this chapter the problems of the origin of these three systems of writing will be discussed separately.

A. The Origin of the Indus Valley Script.

The earliest script known in India is that discovered in the Indus Valley at Harappa and Mohenjodaro.[1] Unfortunately it has not been satisfactorily deciphered as yet. This fact has rendered the solution of the problem of the origin of the Indus Valley script all the more difficult. Scholars, who think that the Indus Valley culture was Dravidian, regard the script also of Dravidian origin. The main difficulty in accepting this view is that the earliest specimen of writing posterior to the Indus Valley script is found in northern India and not in the South where the bulk of the Dravidian people live. On the basis of the resemblance between the Indus Valley script on the one hand and the Sumerian

[1] Sir John Marshall: *Mohenjodaro and the Indus Civilization*, Vol. I and II; see Table No. I.

and the Elamite on the other many scholars are inclined to suggest that the Indus Valley script was imported into India from Western Asia. To our great disadvantage the language of the script is still a mystery, and it cannot be definitely ascertained on positive grounds as to which of them were the borrowers.

1. *Theory of Dravidian Origin*

Some of the scholars, who believe that the Indus Valley civilization was pre-Aryan and, therefore, non-Aryan, hold the view that the people, the language and the script of the pre-historic Indus Valley were Dravidian. The strongest advocate of this view is Rev. H. Heras, S.I.,[1] though Sir John Marshall and his colleagues[2] held, more or less, similar views. Heras reads the Mohenjodaro inscriptions from the left to the right and transliterates them into the Tamil language. Our greatest difficulty in accepting this view is that we have absolutely no knowledge of the Tamil spoken or written in the fourth millenium B.C. and, therefore, the reading proposed by Heras cannot be verified; the equation of mediaeval or modern Tamil with the Indus Valley language under consideration cannot be regarded as correct. As regards story-telling about the symbols used in the Indus Valley script, it can be accomplished in any language without any real check, because the script is partly pictographic.

2. *Theory of Sumerian or Egyptian Origin*

L. A. Waddel in his book, '*The Indo-Sumerian Seals Deciphered*'[3] maintained that in the fourth millennium B.C. the Indus Valley was colonized by the Sumerians and that they introduced their language and script there. In this book he tried to prove the Sumerian origin of the Indo-Aryans, and on the seals he read the names of the Aryan kings and their capitals mentioned in the early literature of the Indo-Aryans. Waddel was definitely of the opinion that the Indus Valley script was derived from

[1] *Mohenjodaro, the People and the Land*, Indian Culture, III, 1937; Proto Indian Script and Civilization.

[2] *Mohenjodaro and the Indus Civilization*, Vols. I, II.

[3] London: Luzac & Co., 46, Great Russell Street, W.C. 1925.

the Sumerian. Among Indian scholars Dr. Pran Nath[1] shares the views of Waddel and traces the origin of the Indus Valley script to Sumeria. There is no doubt that due to the pictographic nature of the earliest scripts of India, Western Asia and Egypt and Crete and their contact through sea-faring there is some resemblance in them. But who can decide at this stage of our knowledge as to which of them was the originator of the art of writing and which of them the borrowers? According to the historical traditions in Mesopotamia the authors of the Sumerian civilization themselves came from outside and they brought with them agriculture, metal-work and the art of writing. The names of gods and heroes responsible for the introduction of writing in Sumeria appear Indic rather than Semetic. Under the circumstances the opinion of Waddel seems to be fantastic and does not deserve our credence.[2]

3. *Theory of Indigenous Origin*;

Those, who are of the opinion that the people of the Indus Valley were either the Aryans or the Asuras, a human stock allied with the Aryans in race and culture, who later on migrated to Mesopotamia and Western Asia, hold the view that the Indus Valley script originated in this country; its resemblance with the Proto-Elamite, the Sumerian and the Egyptian scripts does not prove that the Indus Valley script was derived from either of the other three; and that perhaps the Indus Valley script was the original one, which spread to other lands through the Asuras and the Paṇis.[3]

It will be instructive to quote the opinion of G. R. Hunter on this point:

"Many of the signs bear a remarkable resemblance to the monumental script of ancient Egypt. The entire body of anthropomorphic signs have Egyptian equivalents which are virtually

[1] *The Script on the Indus Valley Seals*, Indian Historical Quarterly, 1931; *Sumero-Egyptian Origin of the Aryans and the Ṛgveda*, Journal of the Banaras Hindu University, Vol. I. No. 2, 1937.

[2] Woolley, C.L., *The Sumerians*, p. 189.

[3] K. N. Dikshit: *Pre-historic Civilization of the Indus Valley*, p. 46.

exact. And it is interesting to note that not one of these anthropomorphic signs have the remotest parallels in Sumerian or Proto-Elamite. On the other hand there are many of our signs that are exactly paralleled in the Proto-Elamite and Jemdet-Nasr tablets, such as that have no conceivable morphographic equivalent in Egyptian. One is bound to conclude that the presumption is strong that our script has been borrowed in part from Egypt, and in part from Mesopotamia. Of course, there is a considerable proportion of signs that are common to all three scripts, such as the signs for tree, fish, bird, etc. But this is co-incidental and indeed inevitable in the very nature of pictography. It is only safe to draw inferences of casual connection when the less obvious and more conventionalised ideograms, especially those that are so conventionalised that their pictographic origin is hardly determinable, show a marked correspondence, and in a lesser degree, where easily recognisable pictographs show the same variations. Now the latter is very marked as between our script and Proto-Elamite, as will appear from a study of the comparative Table.

.........Of course it is possible that all three had a common ancestry, and that the Egyptian element in our script alone was borrowed. It is even possible that all four scripts may have had a common origin. But this is an enquiry that does not concern us here, and which in the nature of pictography, would be very hard to solve without the aid of anthropological evidences as to whether or not there was in pre-historic times racial affinity between the inhabitants of the Nile, Euphrates and Indus Valleys".[1]

While dealing with the problem of the origin of the Indus Valley script, David Diringer writes, "Two other problems must be mentioned; the origin of the script, and its influence on the creation of other scripts. It seems obvious that the Indus Valley script, which is rather schematic and linear on the extant inscriptions, was originally pictographic, but it is impossible to decide whether it was truly indigenous or imported. A connection between this script and the common ancestor of the

[1] *The Script of Harappa and Mohenjodaro and its connection with other scripts*, pp. 45-47.

Cuneiform writing and of the early Elamite script is probable, but it is impossible to determine what the connection was. Some solutions—none of them can be considered certain—may be suggested, for instance:

(1) The Indus Valley Script was perhaps derived from an, at present unknown, early script, which may have been the common ancestor also of the cuneiform and early Elamite writing.

(2) All three might have been local creations, one probably the prototype of the Cuneiform or of the early Elamite script, being an original invention and the other two being creations inspired by the knowledge of the existence of writing."[1]

In the present state of our knowledge it is not safe to dogmatise on any particular point of view; we can talk only of the possibilities. There is no doubt that during pre-historic times countries bordering on the Arabian and the Mediterranean seas had mutual intercourse and they must have influenced one another. As regards the question of borrowing by one from the others, the following historical tradition will help us:

(1) The authors of ancient Egyptian civilization migrated from Westeren Asia to Egypt.[2]

(2) The Phoenicians, the great sea-faring and cultur-spreading people of ancient times, were colonists in Tyr, the great sea-port of Western Asia, according to the Greek writers.[3]

(3) The Summerians themselves came to Sumeria from outside through seas.[4]

(4) The Aryan tribes, according to the ancient historical traditions recorded in the Purāṇas and the Epics, migrated from N.W. India towards the north and the west.[5]

[1] *The Alphabet*, p. 85.

[2] Maspeor: *The Dawn of Civilization*: *Egypt and Chaldea*, p. 45; *Passing of the Empire*, Viii; Smith; *Ancient Egyptians*, p. 24;

[3] Herodouts, 11. 44.

[4] Wolley, C.L., *The Sumerians*, 189.

[5] F. E. Pargiter, *Anc. Ind. Historical Traditions*, XXV.

Under the circumstances, there is no impossibility about the fact that either the Aryans or their cousins Asuras invented the Indus Valley script and carried it to Western Asia and Egypt and thus inspired the evolution of scripts in these parts of the world.

B. The Origin of the Brāhmī Script

As its very name suggests the *Brāhmī* script[1] was invented by the Indo-Aryans for the preservation of '*Brahma*' or Veda and was mainly employed by the Brāhmaṇas, whose duty it was to conserve the Vedic literature and to hand it down to the succeeding generations by writing and copying the texts from time to time and by teaching them to their students[2]. This fact was accepted by the Jain and the Buddhist writers of later centuries, who, being highly critical of the Vedic literature and the Brāhmaṇas, cannot be accused of euphamism. Even the modern writers, who trace the origin of the *Brāhmī* to some Semitic source, admit that the Brāhmaṇas of ancient India borrowed this script, through the traders, from Western Asia and perfected it almost beyond recognition. It may be submitted in this connection that original impulse for the invention of writing in India was not commercial, as it was in Sumeria and Babylonia, but religious and it is highly improbable that the Brāhmaṇas from the cradle of the Aryan civilization in northern India picked up the threads of their sacred script '*Brāhmī*' from the sea-ports of Sindhu and Surāṣṭra. The greatest difficulty in the way of modern scholarship in solving the problem of the origin of the *Brāhmī* script is the absence of any inscription in the *Brāhmī*, which can be assigned to the period prior to the fifth century B.C. Consequently a number of theories have been propounded to trace

[1] See Table No. II.

[2] Oral recitation played an important part in teaching. This fact has misled many scholars to suppose that the written texts were not in existence at the time of teaching. Such scholars forget the fact that even today, after the envention of the most advanced type of printing, the orthodox Hindus insist on oral teaching and in their opinion an able teacher should not depend on books at the time of teaching.

the origin of the *Brāhmī* script. These theories can be divided broadly into two groups; (1) the theories which regard the *Brāhmī* script of indigenous origin and (2) the theories which trace the origin of the *Brāhmī* script to some foregin source. In the following lines an attempt is made to reporduce briefly and to discuss the various theories.

1. *Theories Advocating Indigenons Origin*:

(1) *Dravidian Origin*: Edward Thomas[1] and other scholars of his opinion maintained that the Dravidians were responsible for the invention of the *Brāhmī* characters which were borrowed by the Aryans. The basis of this opinion seems to be the assumption that before the supposed Aryan invasion of India the Dravidians occupied the entire land and they, being culturally more advanced than the Aryans, invented the art of writing. This supposition is basically wrong, as the original habitat of the Dravidians was in the South and the original home of the Aryans was in northern India.

Against this theory it may be urged that the earliest specimens of writing are found in northern India, the original home of the Aryans and not in the south, the native place of the Dravidians. Moreover, the present purest representative of the Dravidian languages, Tamil, has only the first and the fifth letters of a *Varga* (class) whereas the *Brāhmī* has all the five letters of a *Varga* (class). Phonetically the poor Tamil characters obviously seem to have been borrowed from the phonetically commodious *Brāhmī* characters.

(2) *Aryan or Vedic Origin*:—General Cunningham[2], Dowson[3], Lassen[4], etc. held the view that the Aryan priests developed the *Brāhmī* alphabet from indigenous Indian hieroglyphics.

Bühler[3] criticises Cunningham in the following words, "Cunningham's opinion, which was formerly shared by some

[1] *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1883 No. III.
[2] *Coins of Ancient India*, Vol. I, p. 52.
[3] *JRAS*, 1881, p. 102, *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXXV, 253.
[4] *Indische Alterthumskunde*, 2nd edition, i. p. 1006 (1867).
[5] *Indian Palæography*, p. 9.

prominent scholars, presupposes the use of Indian hieroglyphic pictures of which hitherto no trace has been found". The discovery of the Indus Valley script[1], which is partly pictographic, has considerably weakened the objection put forward by Bühler. He also minimised the importance of some pictographic evidences, the survivals of which are found in some of the caves of India[2]. Unless the phonetic values of the Indus Valley script are exactly fixed nothing certain, regarding its bearing on the *Brāhmī* character, can be said. But it is quite possible to derive some of the *Brāhmī* characters from some of the signs of the Indus Valley script.[3]

R. Shamasastri[4] propounded a theory according to which the *Brāhmī* characters were derived from various signs and symbols, representing *devas* (deities) and called '*devanagara*', 'the city of gods'. The greatest weakness of this theory is that all the evidences produced by him come from the Tantric texts of a very late origin. Yet this theory cannot be categorically rejected and it is very near the pictographic origin of the *Brāhmī* characters. The name of the script, '*Brāhmī*' also lends some support to this theory.

Dr. David Diringer[5] has reminded the advocates of the indigenous origin of the *Brāhmī* script of the following facts:

"(1) The existence in the same country of two or more successive scripts does not prove that one depends on the other; for instance the early Greek alphabets employed in Crete did not descend from the early Cretan or Minoan script.

(2) Even if similarities could be proved between the shapes of the Indus Valley characters and those of the *Brāhmī* letters, evidence would still be lacking that the latter descended from the former, unless the likeness of the signs belonging to the two systems corresponds with the identity of their phonetic values.

[1] Marshall: *Mohenjodaro and Indus Valley Civilization*, Vol. II.
[2] *Indian Palæography*, p. 9.
[3] Marshall: *Mohenjodaro and the Indus Valley Civilization*, Vol. II, p.
[4] *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXXV. pp. 253-67; 270-90; 311-24.
[5] *The Alphabet*, pp. 328-334.

(3) The Indus Valley writing was presumably a transitional system or a mixed syllabic-ideograhic script, while the *Brāhmī* script was a semi-alphabet. As far as we know, no syllabic-ideographic script became alphabetic without the influence of another alphabetic script.........No serious scholar has ever tried to show how the Indus Valley ideographic script could have developed into the *Brāhmī* semi-alphabetic writing.

(4) The extensive Vedic literature gives no indication of the existence of writing in early Aryan India........ writing is never mentioned. Among the ancient Indian divinities there was no god of "writing", but there was Sarasvatī, the goddess of knowledge, learning and eloquence.

(5) Only the Buddhist literature gives clear references to writing in ancient times.

(6) ....on epigraphic grounds alone it is supposed that the *Brāhmi* script existed in the sixth century B.C.

(7) According to the great authorities on the subject...... the period 800-600 B.C. in India shows a remarkable advance in industrial life. ....This period coincided with the development of maritime commerce ....from parts on the south-west coast of India...... to Babylon. It is generally argued that the development of commerce favoured the diffusion of a knowledge of writing.

(8) Very little is known about the early Aryan history of India. The fantastic theories such as that of Mr. Tilaka, who attributed the earliest hymns of the Vedic literature to about 7000 B.C. or that of Mr. Shankara Balakrishna Dikshit who attributed certain *Brāhmaṇas* to 3800 B.C. cannot be taken seriously. The immigration of Aryan tribes into India is now attributed to the second half of the second millennium B.C. and the entire Vedic literature is attributed to the same period continuing into the early part of the first millenium B.C.

(9) In the sixth century B.C. northern India witnessed a remarkable religious revolution which profoundly influenced the course of Indian history. There is no doubt that while the knowledge of writing may have favoured the diffusion of Jainism and Buddhism, these two religions, and specially the latter, contributed much to the diffusion of the knowledge of writing.

(10) On the whole many different lines of evidences suggest a date between the eighth and the sixth century B.C. for the introduction of writing into 'Aryan' India...".

The reminders of Dr. David Diringer demand consideration. The first two of these are at the best prudentials. Unless it is conclusively proved otherwise the existence of two successive scripts in a country is more in favour of the latter's derivation from the former than against it. As regards the third reminder, it is yet to be proved that the Indus Valley script has no phonetic elements in it. The fourth reminder is totally untrue and it is based upon the inadequate study of the Vedic literature. The statement that 'there was no god of 'writing' but there was *Sarasvatī*, the goddess of knowledge, learning and eloquence' is not correct. *Sarasvatī* herself and her counter-partner *Brahmā* (a god) both are depicted in the Hindu pantheon with a written book in one of their hands. To get rid of the fifth reminder one has simply to go into the back-ground of the Buddhist literature and to study the Vedāṅgas and the early Vedic literature. The sixth reminder refers only to monumental survivals; it cannot go against the use of writing on perishable materials. The seventh reminder of the commercial contact between India and the west does not prove that the former was the borrower; it may be just the opposite. The eighth reminder tries to show that the Indian civilization is comparatively younger than the civilization of Western Asia. The theories of Tilaka and Shankara regarding the age of the Veidc literature, may appear fantastic to western writers, but even sober western scholars like Bühler and Winternitz have shown that the beginning of Aryan civilization in India can be assigned to the fourth millennium B.C. As regards the ninth reminder, there is no doubt that Jainism

and Buddhism popularsied the use of *Prakrits*, and with it the use of writing, but both the religions presuppose the use of writing for Vedic or Sanskrit language; as a matter of fact, the Buddha prohibited his disciples from writing his dialogues in Chhandas (Vedic or Sanskrit language). The tenth reminder is no argument at all; it is based upon the presumption that the origin of writing is non-Aryan and that the Aryans were intruders in India. So far nothing substantial has been said which can negative the possibility of the derivation of the *Brāhmī* from some pre-existing indigenous system of writing.

2. *Theories Advocating Foreign Origin.*

Theories advocating the foreign origin of the *Brāhmī* script can be divided into two sub-groups—(1) some of the theories suggest that the *Brāhmī* was derived from the Greek alphabet and (2) the majority of them belive that the origin of the *Brāhmī* lies in some of, or in the combination of two or more of, Semitic characters.

(1) *Greek Origin.* The tendency among early European scholars was to trace anything good or great in India to some Greek source. Otfried Mueller,[1] James Prinsep,[2] Raoul de Rochette,[3] Emile Senart,[4] Goblet d' Alviella,[5] Joseph Halevy,[6] Wilson[7] etc. were of the opinion that the *Brāhmī* script was derived from the Greek alphabet. In the words of Dr. Bühler this "*a priori* improbable theory may be at once eliminated, as it does not agree with the literary and palæographic evidences just discussed, which makes it more than probable that the *Brāhmī* was used several centuries before the Mauryan period, and had had a long history at the time to which the earliest Indian inscriptions

[1] Quoted by David Diringer in his book '*Alphabet*', p. 335.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid
[4] *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXXV. p, 253.
[5] *Alphabet*, p. 335.
[6] *Journal Asiatique*, 1588, P. 268.
[7] *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXXV, p. 253.

belong". The relation between the Greek and the *Brāhmī* characters seem to be just the otherwise. There is no doubt that the Greek alphabet was deeply indebted to the Phœnician characters. It has already been suggested that the Phœnician ((=the Vedic *Paṇis*) were of the Indian origin, who carried with them the art of writing from India and spread it over western Asia and Greece.

(2) *Semitic Origin.* This theory has a large number of supporters, but they differ as to which branch of the Semitic characters produced or influenced the *Brāhmī* characters. For the sake of convenience they can be divided into the following groups:

(a) Phœnician Origin. The Phœnician origin of the *Brāhmi* alphabet was favoured by the eminent scholars like Weber, Benfey, Jensen, Bühler etc.[1] The main argument in support of this theory was 'that about one-third of the Phœnician letters were identical with the earliest forms of the corresponding *Brāhmī* signs; that another third were somewhat similar, and the remainder can be more or less harmonized'. The great difficulty in the acceptance of this theory was believed to be the lack of direct communication in the period when the *Brāhmī* script appeared, between India and Phœnicia and the influence of the Phoenicians on the neighbouring scripts of Western Asia was supposed to be negligible. I do not think that there was a lack of communication between India and the eastern coast of the Mediterranean any time between 1500 B.C. and 400 B.C. The similarity between the Phœnician and the *Brāhmī* characters is also patent. Now the question is which of the two was the borrowers? This question is also linked up with the origin of the Phœnicians

[1] David Diringer, *Alphabet*, p. 335; Bühler, *Indian Palæography*, pp. 9-11.

as a people. The scholars of Tyre always maintained, and it was accepted by the Greek historians also, that the Phœnicians went to the east coast of the Mediterranean from the east via sea.[1] The *Ṛgvedic*[2] evidences indicate the Indian origin of the Phœnicians. The lack of similarity between the Phœnician alphabet and the Semitic characters of Western Asia also suggests that the Phœnicians were immigrants there from outside. Thus it becomes very probable that Phœnician alphabets were carried from India to the shores of the Mediterranean.

(*b*) *South Semitic Origin.* Taylor, Deeke and Canon were of the opinion that the *Brāhmī* characters were derived from the southern Semitic characters.[3] It is difficult to support this opinion. Though the contact between India and Arabia was quite possible, as the latter lay between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, Arabian influence on Indian culture, before the advent of Islam in India, is not traceable. Moreover the similarity between the *Brāhmī* character and the South Semitic characters is so negligible that it is ridiculous to suggest any connection between the two.

(*c*) *North Semitic Origin* The greatest champions of this theory was Dr. Bühler.[4] While pointing out the difficulties in deriving the *Brāhmī* characters from the Southern Semitic characters, he said, "These difficulties disappear with the direct derivation of the *Brāhmi* from the oldest North Semitic alphabets, which show the same type from Phœnicia to Mesopotamia. The few admissible equations, which Weber's earlier attempt contains, may be easily removed with the help of recently discovered

[1] Herodotos, II, 44.
[2] Vi. 51, 14; 61, 1; Vii. 6, 3; Vi. 39, 2.
[3] David Diringer, *Alphabet*, p. 335.
[4] *Indian Palæography*, pp. 9-11.

forms, and it is not difficult to recognize the principles, according to which the Semitic signs have been converted into Indian ones".

Attempting the derivation of the *Brāhmī* from the Northern Semitic alphabet, Bühler recognized the following peculiarities of the old Indian alphabet:

"(1) The letters are set up as straight as possible, and with occasional exceptions in the signs of *ṭa*, *ṭha* and *ba*, they are made equal in height.

(2) The majority consists of vertical lines with appendages attached mostly to the foot, occasionally at the foot and the top, or rarely in the middle; but there is no case in which an appendage has been added to the top alone.

(3) At the top of the letters appear mostly the ends of verticals, less frequently short horizontal strokes, still more rarely curves on the tops of angles opening downwards, and quite exceptionally, in *ma* and in one form of *jha* two lines rising upwards. In no case does the top show several angles, placed side by side, with a vertical or slanting line hanging down, on a triangle or a circle with a pendent-line".

Bühler explained the above peculiarities and deduced the principles of the derivation of the *Brāhmī* from the North Semitic characters on the basis of the following tendencies of the Hindus:

(1) A certain pedantic formalism.

(2) A desire to frame signs suited for the formation of regular lines.

(3) An aversion to top-heavy characters. In his opinion "the last peculiarity is probably due in part to the circumstance that since early times the Indians made their letters hang down from an imaginary or really drawn upper line, and in part due to the introduction of vowel-signs, most of which are attached horizontally to the tops of the consonants. Signs with the ends of verticals at the top were, of course, best suited for such a script. Owing to these inclinations and aversions

of the Hindus the heavy tops of many Semitic letters had to be got rid of by turning the signs topsy-turvy, or laying them on their sides, by opening the angles, and so forth. Finally, the change in the direction of the writing necessitated a further change, in as much as the signs had to be turned from the right to the left, as in Greek".

On the basis of the above considerations Bühler maintained that twenty-two letters of the *Brāhmī* alphabet were derived from North Semitic alphabet, some of them from the early Phœnician, a few from Mesa's stone inscription and five from the script on the weights from Assyria. The remaining letters of the *Brāhmī* were also derived from the borrowed signs by introducing certain devices. The comparative table (No. 111) will show the method of derivation suggested by Bühler.

Another great advocate of the theory of the North Semitic origin is Dr. David Diringer.[1] He writes, "All historical and cultural evidence is best co-ordinated by the theory which considers the early Aramaic alphabet as the prototype of the *Brāhmi* script. The acknowledged resemblance of the *Brāhmi* signs to the Phœnician letters also applies to the early Aramaic letters, while in my opinion there can be no doubt that of all the Semitics, the Aramaean traders were the first who came in direct communication with the Indo-Aryan merchants."

He further says,

"Over sixty years ago, R. N. Cust, the then Hon. Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society, published an article in the journal of that society (on the Origin of the Indian Alphabet, J. R. A. S. N. S. XVI, 1884, pp. 325-359). Since then, many new discoveries have been made, and the problem has been discussed in many hundred of books and articles, and yet, concerning the origin of the *Brāhmi* script, I even now fairly well agree with the first two of his conclusions :

"(1) The Indian alphabet is in no respect an independent

[1] *Alphabet*, pp. 336, 337.

invention of the people of India, who, however, elaborated to a marvellous extent a loan, which they had received from others.

(2) The idea of representing vowel and consonant sounds by a symbol of a pure alphabetic character was derived from Western Asia beyond any reasonable doubt." (The Indian characters, however, are semi-alphabetic and not pure alphabetic).

In a way of arguments in favour of his theory he states,

(1) "We need not assume that the *Brāhmi* is a simple derivative of the Aramaic alphabet. It was probably mainly the idea of alphabetic writing which was accepted, although the shapes of many *Brāhmi* signs show also Semitic influence and the original direction of the *Brāhmi* character from right to left was also of Semitic origin."

(2) "Some scholars hold that, as the Indian writing is in appearance a syllabry, it could not have been derived from an alphabet; alphabetic script being obviously more advanced than syllabic. These scholars seem to have forgotten the fact that Semitic alphabet did not contain vowels, and while the Semitics could, if necessary, dispense with vowel signs, the Indo-European languages could not do so. The Greeks solved this problem satisfactorily, but the Indians were less successful. It may be that the inventor of the *Brāhmi* did not grasp the essence of the alphabetic system of writing. It is quite possible that the Semitic script appeared to him as semi-syllabic, as it could seem to any speaker of an Indo-Aryan language."

Before we examine the theory of the North Semitic origin of the *Brāhmi* characters, it is necessary that we should closely study the comparative table of the Semitic and the *Brāhmi* characters :[1]

[1] See Table No. III.

The main arguments in favour of the Semitic origin of the *Brāhmi* script are the following :

(1) The resemblance between the Semitic and the *Brāhmi* characters.

(2) The early Indian writing was pictographic; no alphabetic writing can be derived from pictographs; the earliest known alphabets are Semitic; hence, the *Brāhmi* (semi-alphabetic) could be derived only from the Semitic sources.

(3) The supposed original direction of the *Brāhmi* from the right to the left.

(4) The absence of the specimens of writing before fifth century B. C. in India.

Let us examine these arguments one by one. There is no doubt that there is a remote resembalance between the Phœnician and the Aramaic alphabets of North-Western Asia and the *Brāhmi* script of India. But the contention of Bühler and other scholars of his school of opinion that the latter was derived from the former can not be proved. Specially the methods of derivation suggested by Bühler are fantastic, and if they are accepted as valid the *Brāhmī* characters can be derived not only from the Phœnician and the Aramaic but from any known characters of the world. Some instances of forced derivation are given in the Table No. IV.

The remote resemblance between the two sets of characters is due to the fact that the Phœnicians originally belonged to India, as it has been suggested in the first chapter of this work.[1] The Phœnicians carried the Indian alphabet with them to the extreme North-West of Asia. But surrounded as they were by Semitic peoples, their characters underwent a great change, though they also influenced the Northern Semitic characters called Aramaic, which inspired a number of other characters of Western Asia excepting the Southern Semitic and the Egyptian. So, if there was any derivation, either in form or in inspiration, it were the Phœnician and the Aramaic

[1] Cf. *Ṛgveda*, vi and vii.

characters which derived some elements from the proto-type of the *Brāhmī* and not the vice versa.

As regards the second argument, first of all its very premises that an alphabetic writing cannot be derived from a pictographic one is wrong. There is absolutely no doubt that all earliest writings, by very nature of things, were pictographic[1]. "Man began his writing with picture-writing, just as the child likes to begin." Of course, it is a different matter as to which of the inventors of pictographs could develop alphabets out of pictographs and to what amount of perfection. Secondly, the earliest specimens of writing found in India on the Indus Valley inscriptions are not purely pictographic and mostly phonetic, syllabic and tending to become alphabetic.[2] Moreover, many of the symbols, which are supposed to be pictographs, are nothing more than the combinations of phonetic symbols mistaken for pictographs. Hence the derivation of the *Brāhmī* alphabet from the Indus Valley Script can, under no circumstances, be ruled out.

The third argument that the *Brāhmī* was originally written from the right to the left and that this fact indicates the Semitic origin of the *Brāhmī* is based upon very meagre and doubtful data. When Bühler wrote in his 'Indian Studies' and finally published his 'Indian Palæography' the specimens oft he *Brāhmī* written from the right to the left consisted of the following:

(1) A few letters in the edicts of Aśoka.

(2) Inscriptions on the coins discovered by Cunningham at Eraṇa in the Jubblulpur district of C. P. (Madhya Pradesh).

To these may be added

(3) The Yerraguḍi Version of the Minor Rock Edict of Aśoka found in the Karnul district of the Madras Presidency.[3]

Bühler regarded the above two sets of specimens as the missing link in the chain of arguments which went to prove the

[1] David Diringer, *Alphabet*, 21.

[2] Cf. Marshall, *Mohenjodaro And The Indus Civilization*, Vol. II.

[3] D. C. Sircar, *Ind. Hist. Quart*, Vol. VII. p. 817 ff.

derivation of the *Brāhmī* alphabet from the Semitic alphabets which were written from right to the left. But this link discovered by Bühler appears to be very weak. First of all the specimens are sporadic and very small in number in comparison with a large number of contemporary inscriptions written from the left to the right. Some irregular forms of letters indicate the fluid state of characters which became fixed later on and not their derivation from any foreign source. Secondly, the inscriptions on coins are sometimes reversed due to the mistake of the mould-maker, who inadvertently engraves straight letters on the mould, and, therefore, they cannot be sure indicators of the directions of writing, unless they correspond with the majority of cases. That is why Hultzsch and Fleet did not agree with the conclusions drawn by Bühler. As regards the Yerraguḍi version of the Minor Rock Edict of Aśoka, it is a peculiar case. It seems that the engraver, though originally practised in the usual style of *Brāhmī* writing from the left to the right, was trying a new experiment. He wrote the first line from the left to the right and the second from the right to the left and thus he cotinued, changing the direction of writing in the alternative lines. Thus it is clear that he was not following any regular and set style, but he was trying a new experiment. Moreover, in the line which ran from the right to the left only the positions of letters were changed and not their forms, which shows that it was a forced and artificial type of writing and it had no bearing on the origin of the *Brāhmī* alphabet.

The fourth argument is at the best an *argumentum ex silentio* for the period between the fifth centurey B. C. and fourth millenium B. C. to which the Indus Valley script belongs. As a matter of fact all archæological discoveries are chance discoveries and unless all ancient cities in Northern India are excavated and full allowance is made to its destructive floods and damp climate, no body can claim that writing did not exist in this vast period. Literary evidences indicating the existence of writing during the pre-Buddhist period of Indian history going back to millennia are overwhelming.

Even Bühler recognized its weight in the following words: "the inference that a Vedic work which does not mention writing must have been composed when writing was unknown in India will be dropped." Even the Indus Valley inscriptions, which are fragmentary and contain names of persons, guilds and deities, and which have survived on hard materials of writing, prove that extensive writing work was done on perishable soft materials also available in India. Under the circumstances one need not go outside India for searching the proto-type of the *Brāhmī* alphabet.

3. *Conclusion.*

Before seeking to derive the *Brāhmi* alphabet from any known alphabet one should note its following characteristics:

(1) The *Brāhmī* alphabet contains independent and indubitable symbols for almost all pronounced sounds.
(2) Identity between pronounced letters and written alphabets.
(3) The most exhaustive symbols for vowels and consonants, numbering sixty four.
(4) Different signs for short and long vowels.
(5) Signs for *Anusvāra* (nasal sound = ∸) *Anunāsika* (nasal sound=ँ) and *Visarga* (a sort of hard breathing = :).
(6) The phonetic classification of the alphabet according to the places of pronunciation.
(7) The combination of vowels with consonants with the help of medial signs.

With the above characteristics the *Brāhmī* alphabet could not possibly be derived from the Semitic alphabets, which completely lack in them. The Northern Semitic alphabet consists of twenty-two signs for eighteen sounds. In it there is no identity between the pronounced letters and the written alphabet. It has several characters for one sound. It does not make any distinction between the long and the short vowels, nor does it contain any signs for *Anusvāra*

(nasals) and *Visarga* (hard breathing). In the Semitic alphabet the consonants and the vowels cannot coalesce, rather the vowels are written after the consonants. Phonetically the Semitic alphabets are a jumble rather than a system, for instance just after *a* (*alif*) which is guttural we have *b* (*be*) which is libial. A set of alphabets poor and defective like the Semitic could not form the basis of the *Brāhmī* alphabet. Why should the authors of the *Brāhmī* alphabet look to the Semitic and take resort to all the cumbrous devices suggested by Bühler for the derivation of the *Brāhmī* from the Semitic?

Bühler recognizes the highly phonetic and grammatical nature of the *Brāhmī* alphabet and concedes that its oldest shape was determined by the Indians: "Nevertheless, the oldest known form of the *Brāhmī*, without a doubt, was a script framed by learned Brahmans for writing Sanskrit. This assertion is borne out not only by the remnants of the Gaya alphabet of Asoka's stone masons, which must have contained signs for the Sanskrit vowels *AI* and *AU* and which is arranged according to phonetic principles, but also by the influence of phonetics and grammar which is clearly discernible in the formation of the derivative signs. The hand of phonologist and grammarian is recognisable in the following points:

(1) The development of five nasal letters and of a sign for nasalisation ...., as well as of a complete set of signs for the long vowels ....

(2) The derivation of the signs for the phonetically very different, but grammatically cognate *sa* and *ṣa* ......

(3) The notation of *U* by the half of *Va*, from which the vowel is frequently derived by *samprasāraṇa*.

(4) The derivation of *O* from *U* ...... by the addition of a stroke.

(5) The non-expression of medial *a*, in accordance with the teachings of the grammarians who consider it inherent in every consonant......... .

All this has so learned an appearance and is so artificial that it could only have been invented by Pandits, not by traders and clerks."

7

A people who had the exceptional genius of evolving scientific phonetics and grammar and who could invent more than half of their alphabet need not look towards the poor and defective Semitic alphabets for borrowing. It is rather surprizing how Bühler in view of these facts believed that the Indians borrowed their alphabet from the Semitics.

A full consideration of various factors for the evolution of an alphabet clearly indicates that the *Brāhmī* characters were invented by the genius of the Indian people who were far ahead of other peoples of ancient times in linguistics and who evolved vast Vedic literature involving a definite knowledge of alphabet. The *Brāhmī* was derived from pictographs, ideographs and phonetic sings, the earliest specimens of which are to be found in the Indus Valley inscriptions. For illustration of the derivation of the *Brāhmī* from the Indus Valley script the comparative table (No.V) is instructive.

C. The Origin of the Kharoṣṭhī Alphabet.

1. *The Names.*

The *Kharoṣṭhī* script[1] is known by various names. It was formerly called Bactrian, Indo-Bactrian, Aryan, Bactro-Pali, North-Western Indian, Kabulian, *Kharoṣṭhi* etc. It most popular name, however, is *Kharoṣṭhī*, which was accepted on the basis of the Chinese literature in which this name continued upto the seventh century A.D.[2]

2. *The Origin of the Name.*

Generally the following explanations of this name are found :

(1) The inventor of this script was a person called *Kharoṣṭha* (*Khara* = *Oṣṭha*[3] = asslip).

(2) It is so called, because it was used by the *Kharoṣṭhas*, the barbarous peoples on the north-western boundaries

[1] See Table No. V.

[2] *Fa-wan-shu-lin ; Babylonian and Oriental Record*, I. 59.

[3] *Kia-lu-se-ta*=*K*—*lu*—se—*to* = *Kh*—*ro*—s—*ta* = *Kharoṣṭha*. See *Fa-wæn-shu-lin*.

of India, for instance the *Yavanas* (Greeks), the *Śakas* (Scythians), the Tuṣāras (Kuṣaṇs) and other peoples of Central Asia.

(3) *Kharoṣṭha* is the Samskrit form of Kashgar, a province in Central Asia, which was the latest centre of this script.[1] Sten Konow opined on this suggestion in the following words, "It is true that numerous *Kharoṣṭhī* documents have been found in Chinese Turkestan, notably in the eastern oases to the south of the desert, and that the only known *Kharoṣṭhi* manuscript comes from the Khotan country. The alphabet is, however, everywhere, used for writing an Indian language, and we should *a priori* be inclined to think that it was brought to Turkestan by Indian immigrants. Moreover, the manuscript and the documents belong to a comparatively late date, none of them being apparently older than the second century A.D. In India on the other hand, the use of the *Kharoṣṭhi* can be traced back to the third century B.C." (Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarm, Vol. II, p. xiv).

(4) It is the Indian adaptation of the Iranian word '*Khara-oṣṭa* or '*Kharaposta*', meaning 'ass-skin'. Most probably this script was used for writing on ass-skin.

(5) There was an Aramaic word '*Kharoṭṭha*' used for this script, which in course of time, through popular method of derivation, assumed the Samskrit form Kharoṣṭha. (Cf. Ludwig, Gurupiya Kaumudi, pp. 68 ff).

The earliest tradition about the name is recorded in the Fa-wan-shu-lin, a Chinese work of 668 A.D., according to which

[1] Professor Sylvain Levi maintained that the correct name of the script was Kharoṣṭra, which was derived from the Chinese word, 'kia-lu-shu-ta(n)-le' used for the province of Kashgar. (*Bulletin de 1' Ecole Francaise d' extreme-orient, ii, 1902, pp. 246 ff*). Messrs. O. Franke and R. Pischel protested against the derivation of the Chinese word from '*Kharostra*' and held that '*Kharoṣtra*' was never used in India and the only known and the correct form was 'Kharoṣṭha'. *Sitzungsbe-rich der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenchaften, Berlin*, 1903, pp. 184ff., 735ff.

the script is so called, because it was invented by a person who bore that name *Kharoṣṭha*. Whether this tradition is a name-myth or based upon facts, it is difficult to say. So far as other explanations are concerned, they are mere conjectures without any evidence. The name '*Kharoṣṭha*' is evidently Indian, a Prakritised form of Samskrit 'Kharauṣṭha'. The script may have been called so due to the fact that most of the Kharoṣṭhi characters are irregular elongated curves and they look like the moving lips of an ass (Khara). Originally it must have been a nick-name, which got currency in course of time.

3. *The Theory of Aramaic Origin.*

The most current theory regarding the origin of the Kharoṣṭhi script is that it originated from the Aramaic alphabet.[1] The following arguments are produced in favour of this theory .

(1) Resemblance between the Aramaic and the *Kharoṣṭhī* characters. "Finally, they are confirmed by the circumstance that the majority of the *Kharoṣṭhi* signs can be most easily derived from the Aramaic types of the fifth century B.C. which appear in the Saqqarh and Teima inscriptions of B.C. 482 and of about B.C. 500, while a few letters agree with somewhat earlier forms on the later Assyrian weights and the Babylonian seals and gems, and two or three are more closely allied to the later signs of Lesser Teima inscription, the Stele Vaticana, and the Libationlable from the Serapeum. The whole ductus of the *Kharoṣṭhī*, with its long-drawn and long tailed letters, is that of the characters on the Mesopotamian weights, seals and cameos, which reoccurs in the inscriptions of Saqqarh, Teima and the Serapeum."[2]

(2) The direction of the *Kharoṣṭhī* script from the right to the left.

[1] The greatest champion of this theory was Bühler (*Indian Palæography*, pp. 19-20) and it was accepted by the majority of scholars.

[2] Bühler, *Indian Palæography*, p. 20.

(3) The *Kharoṣṭhī* has certain characteristics common with the Semitic scripts, for instance, the absence of long vowels.

(4) The use of *Kharoṣṭhī* in only those parts of India which were occupied by the Iranians from the second half of the sixth century B.C. upto the fourth century B.C.

(5) The Aśokan edicts found in the North-West of India at Mansera and Shahbazgarhi use for 'writing' or 'edict' the word '*Dipi*' which evidently was borrowed from the old Persian.

(6) The appearance of the *Kharoṣṭhī* in India after its Iranian invasion.

(7) The wide use of the Aramaic alphabet in Western Asia and Egypt and its acceptance by the Iranian emperors for administrative use, which brought it to India.

(8) The Aramaic alphabet was adapted to Indian Languages by introducing a number of modifications and additions.

(9) The later analogy of the Arabic script which was introduced into India in the mediæval times with some modifications and it was used for writing Indian languages.

Let us examine the arguments in favour of the Aramaic origin of the *Kharoṣṭhī* one by one :

(1) There is some resemblance in the general external appearance of the *Kharoṣṭhī* and the Aramaic characters as regards the system of their formation, their cursive style and their direction of writing from the right to the left. But resembalance cannot go beyond this. Bühler's attempt at derivation of the *Kharoṣṭhī* signs from the Aramaic ones is very laboured and the principles of derivation suggested by him look like principles underlying agility exercises. As a matter of fact all letters are formed by the combination of lines, curves, angles, hooks, knots, circles etc. and

by changing the position of these constituents any one letter can be derived from the other. The absurdity of Bühler's theory becomes patent when we note that he derives the *Brāhmī* characters from the Aramaic of the eighth or the tenth century B.C. and he again derives the *Kharoṣṭhī* signs from the same Aramaic of the fifth century B.C. A close study of the comparative table will reveal that resemblance between the *Kharoṣṭhī* and the Aramaic is very superfluous and it does not warrant the derivation of the former from the latter.

(2) The direction of the *Kharoṣṭhī* from the right to the left is no guarantee that it was derived from the Semitic source, as leftward movement of writing cannot be regarded an absolute monopoly of the Semitic people. In a vast country like India the evolution of two types of writing, one running from the left to the right and the other from the right to the left was not an impossibility.

(3) The absence of long vowels in the *Kharoṣṭhī* is due to the fact that it was used for writing Prakrits which avoid long vowels, big compounds and difficult ligatures. Thus the so-called common characteristics of the *Kharoṣṭhī* were due to its popular use and not due to any Semitic influence.

(4) It may be possible that the North-West part of India was under Persian empire from the sixth to the fourth century B.C. But not a single official document of the Persian emperors in *Kharoṣṭhī* is found in that part of India, nor any Persian document in Aramaic, which could be imitated by Indians. Most probably the Persians did not rule over India directly and they had no colonies or settlements in this country. Therefore, their influence on India was not so deep as to initiate a new system of writing. Whenever foreign alphabets were adopted in India, they were adopted almost directly and

completely, for instance the Arabic letters in the mediæval times and the English (Roman) letters in modern times.

(5) Bühler does not give any reason as to why the word '*Dipi*' should be regarded exclusively Persian or non-Sanskritic. This word can easily be popularly derived from the Sanskrit root '*dip*' 'to shine', 'to be illustrious' or 'to manifest'. Letters were figuratively regarded as shining, illustrious and manifesting.

(6) The marking of Persian siglois with *Kharoṣṭhī* syllables presupposes the existence of the *Kharoṣṭhī* script in a developed form before the Persian domination over the North-Western part of India.

(7) There is no doubt that the Aramaic alphabet had a wide currency in Western Asia, but it had no circulation in India. First of all it is highly doubtful whether India was administratively ever under Persian rule;[1] secondly, as pointed out before, there is not a single official document of the Persian emperors written in the Aramaic found in India. Under the circumstances there was hardly any occasion or impetus for imitating or adapting the Aramaic characters by the Indian.

(8) Resemblance between the two scripts is so remote and contact between India and Persia was so formal that the question of adaptation could not arise.

(9) The analogy of the introduction of the Arabic or the so-called Persian script into India during the mediaeval period is not apt. The Arabic alphabet was exclusively used by the Arab and the Turk invaders of India and, when they settled in this country as rulers, they used the Arabic and Persian languages as official languages. Here there was no case of borrowing but bodily introduction of the Arabic script with Arabic and Persian languages.

[1] Dr. R. C. Majumdar, *Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. XXV, No.* 3, *Sept. 1949.*

4. *Indian Origin.*

In deciding the problem of the origin of the *Kharoṣṭhī* alphabet it is necessary to keep in mind the place of its rise and the areas of its expansion later on. The earliest known inscriptions in the *Kharoṣṭhī* so far have been found in the north-west of India. In no country of Western Asia any document or any specimen of writing in *Kharoṣṭhī* has been discovered. Even the Persian emperors, who are supposed to be instrumental in the evolution of the *Kharoṣṭhī* alphabet did not use Aramaic or its supposed derivative *Kharoṣṭhī* for their official business. The earliest known *Kharoṣṭhī* inscriptions of Aśoka belong to the third century B.C. All other inscriptions in *Kharoṣṭhī* found in Baluchistan, Afganisthan and Central Asia are later in date and they clearly indicate that they were carried there by the Indian colonists and the missionaries. Another fact to be noted in connection with the origin of the *Kharoṣṭhī* is that its letters are Indian and it was used for writing Indian languages even in countries outside India. Inspite of its direction from the right to the left its nature of formation is Indian, specially, in attaching *Anusvāra* (nasal symbol) and the medial signs to its characters and also in the formation of ligatures.

Keeping all the circumstances in view it can be safely maintained that the *Kharoṣṭhī* script originated in the north-west part of India and, as it is recorded in Chinese traditions, it was invented by an Indian genius whose nicname was *Kharoṣṭha*, as the letters resembled ass-lips. During the Persian domination over that part of the country the *Kharoṣṭhī* was recognized as a popuiar script and that is why Persian siglois were stamped with *Kharoṣṭhī* syllables. When the Maurays of Mid-India occuiped that part of the country they had also to adopt the *Kharoṣṭhī* script for that part of the country. Next, the Bactrians, the Parthians, the Sakas and the Ḳuṣaṇas used this script for Indian languages side by side with the Greek. Under the Kuṣaṇas the expansion of Buddhism carried the *Kharoṣṭhī* to western and northern regions and the *Kharośṭhī* continued upto the fourth century A.D.

The long association of the *Kharoṣṭhī* with foreign powers in India in the areas dominated by them c eated some aversion towards it in the rest of India. With the rise of the Gupta power and the upsurage of the unificiation of the country and nationalism, the *Kharoṣṭhī* died with its official foreign support and the *Brāhmī*, which was the most widely current script in India, replaced *Kharoṣṭhī* in the north-west part of India also.[1] But, really speaking, there was nothing foreign about *Kharoṣṭhī*. It had its origin, rise and fall in India.

[1] In the west and the north it was replaced by the Arabic which spread there with Islam.

CHAPTER IV.

HISTORY OF THE DECIPHERMENT OF ANCIENT INDIAN SCRIPTS.

The Indians had long forgotten the reading of the ancient scripts of their country. Some scholars of Sanskrit and Prakrit with great efforts, could read the manuscripts belonging to the seventh and the eighth centuries A.D. but not earlier. The Gupta script and the earlier *Brāhmī* script were sealed books to the Indians. This state of things obtained as early as the fourteenth century A.D. When Firoz Shah Tughlaq shifted the Aśokan pillars from Topra and Meerute to Delhi[1], he invited a number of Sanskrit scholars to read the edicts on those pillars but they were not able to decipher the script of those edicts. Akbar the Great Moghal was also inquisitive about the writing on these pillars, but even in the sixteenth century no serious attempt was mabe to read this ancient script[2]. People were satisfied with the fanciful legend that these pillars were the Staffs of Bhīma (one of the Pāṇḍvas) and the script of them contained the instructions given to the Pāṇḍavas by Śri Krişṇa in the *Paiśāchī* language. This ignorance about Indian history and archæology was due to the disorganization and the consequent disintegration of the political and intellectual life of the country since the last decade of the twelfth century A.D. India started the regaining of its intellectual inquisitivc-ness and stability when the Asiatic Society of Bengal was established on the 15th January, 1784 which inspired the scholars to engage themselve in the study of India's past in all its aspects. Now Indian palæography and epigraphy also attracted the attention of the Indologists.

1. *The Decipherment of the Later Brāhmi Script.*

Soon after the foundation of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal the discovery and the decipherment of the *Brāhmī*

[1] *Shams-i-Sirai, Elliot, Hist. India,* III, 350.

[2] *Akbarnāmaḥ.*

inscriptions began. In 1785 A. D. Charles Wilkins read the Bodal pillar inscription of the Pāla king Nārāyaṇapāla found in the Dinajpur district of Bengal.[1] The next attempt at reading the *Brāhmi* script was made in the same year. Pandit Radhakant Sharma read the Topra-Delhi pillar inscription of the Chāhamāna King Visaladeva (Vigraharāja IV), dated V.E. 1220.[2] These inscriptions could be easily read, as they were very recent in date. In the same year again Mr. J. H. Harrington discovered the Nagarjuni and the Barabar cave inscriptions of the *Maukharī* king Anantavarman. The script of these inscriptions being more archaic than the script of the *Pāla* and the *Chāhamāna* inscriptions was found difficult to be read and Harrington could not decipher them. But Charles Wilkins laboured on these inscriptions between 1785 and 1789 and with the help of these inscriptions he was able to read almost half the letters of the Gupta script.[2] The great historian Colonel James Tod collected a large number of inscriptions found in Rajasthan, Central India and Gujrat between 1818 and 1823 and with the help of Yati Jñānachandra he was partially successful in reading some of these inscriptions. These inscriptions belonged to the period between the seventh and the fifteenth centuries.[3]

Another landmark in the decipherment of the later *Brāhmī* was made when Babington in 1828 prepared a table of letters on the basis of the Sanskrit and Tamil inscriptions discovered at Mamallapuram.[4]

The proper decipherment of the Gupta script was, however, started when in 1834 Captain Troyer read part of the Allahabad pillar inscriptions of Samudragupta. Dr. Mill was more successful in reading the Allahabad pillar inscription[5]

[1] *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. II, p. 167 ; *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. VI. p. 674, plate 36 Nos. 15, 16, 17. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XIII, p. 428.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Tod : *Annals of Rajasthan.*

[4] *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. II, pp. 264-269, plates 13, 15, 17 and 18.

[5] *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. III, p. 339.

and he read completely the Bhitari pillar inscription of Skandagupta in 1837.[1] About the same time W. H. Bothon read a number of copper-plates discovered in Gujrat and which belonged to the kings of the Valabhi dynasty.[2] More substantial and successful reading was that of James Prinsep. He deciphered the Delhi, Kahaum, Eraṇa, Sanchi, Amaravati and Girnar inscriptions of the Gupta period.[3] This completed the reading of the Gupta script. A table of the complete Gupta alphabet was prepared.

2. *The Decipherment of the Early Brāhmi Script.*

The *Brāhmī* inscriptions in the Elora caves attracted the attention of the scholars first. In 1795 Sir Charles Mellet prepared the stampages of these inscriptions and sent them to William Jones for their decipherment, who forwarded them to Wilford for reading them. Wilford could not do any justice to them. Under the wrong guidance of a Sanskrit Pandit made a wrong reading of these inscriptions and he returned them with his reading to Sir William Jones. They were kept lying with Sir William Jones for several years and later on the reading was found to be imaginary.

The first abortive attempt at reading the early *Brāhmī* inscriptions was followed by another attempt by Ch. Lassen. He read the *Brāhmī* legend on the coins of the Indo-Bactrian King Agathocles in 1836. But the legends being very small, only a few of the *Brāhmī* letters were deciphered. The credit of a fuller decipherment of the *Brāhmī* script went to James Prinsep. In 1834-35 he got the stampages of Allahabad, Radhia and Mathia pillar inscriptions and compared them with the Delhi pillar inscription. To his great satisfaction he discovered that all the four inscriptions were identical. Encouraged by this result he analysed the letters of these inscriptions. He found that the same principles of application in the case of the medial signs were present in the early *Brāhmī*

[1] Ibid, Vol. VI p. 1.
[2] Ibid. Vol. IV, p. 477.
[3] Ibid. Vol. VI, p. 218, Vol. VII, pp. 36, 337, 629, 633.
[4] Cunningham, *Archæological Survey Reports*, Vol. I.

inscriptions as in the case of the Gupta inscriptions.[1] A continued study of these inscriptions established the unity and the continuity of the early *Brāhmī* and the Gupta scripts. Previously some scholars had mistaken the early *Brāhmī* script for some form of the Greek alphabet ; this confusion was removed by the attempts of Prinsep. Prinsep first separated the vowels and medial signs and then the consonants ; he compared them with the Gupta characters, fixed their sound-values and classified them under *vargas* (phonetic classes). Thus he was able to decipher the majority of the early *Brāhmī* characters. The table of signs prepared by him was later on found quite correct, except in the case of the signs for *U* and *O*. Almost during the same period Father James Stevenson engaged himself in the task of deciphering the *Brāhmī* characters. He recognized the letters *ka*, *ja*, *pa*, and *ba*.[2] With the help of these letters he tried to read inscriptions. But two obstacles stood in his way. Firstly, he had only a partial knowledge of the *Brāhmī* alphabet and secondly he believed that the language of the *Brāhmī* inscriptions was Sanskrit. Therefore, he could not succeed in reading them.

In 1837 James Prinsep made another attempt at reading the early *Brāhmī* script. He collected and compared the stampages of the small inscriptions on the railing and gate pillars at Sanchi. At the end of all inscriptions he found two letters common. The last two common letters were preceded by *sa* (Prakrit of Sanskrit *sya*, meaning 'of'). He could easily conjecture that the world preceding *sa* must be a proper name and the world following it must be an equivalent of 'gift' or 'dedication'. The first of the last two letters was marked with a medial sign for *ā* and the second was marked with a sign for *anusvāra*. Now the word could easily be read as '*dānaṁ*' and the two *Brāhmī* letters were clearly recognized. At the same time it was also established that the language of of the inscription was Prakrit and not Sanskrit. After this the six missings signs of the *Brāhmī* alphabet were discovered,

[1] *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. III, p. 7. plate 5.

[2] *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. III, p. 485.

among which *I*, *U*, *śa*, *sa* and *ḷā* were published in Bühler's plate II.[1] Grierson found letter *ṇa* in Gaya which figured in Bühler's *Indian Studics.*[2] The existence of the sign for *AU* in the third century B.C. was proved by the Gaya alphabet of Aśoka's masons.[3] *Ū* and *Śa* were first recognized by Cunningham.[4] One form of *ṣa* was read by Senart[5] and another by Hœrnle.[6] Bühler discovered *ḷa* in the Sanchi Votive inscriptions.[7] The credit of preparing a complete and scientific table of the *Brāhmī* characters will certainly go to Bühler.

3. *The Decipherment of the Kharoṣṭhi Script.*

The decipherment of the *Kharoṣṭhī* script should have been easier than the decipherment of the *Brāhmī* script, as a large number of bilingual inscriptions in the Greek and the *Kharoṣṭhī* scripts were found in the north-west of India, but for the confusion regarding the language of the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions. The *Brāhmī* had another advantage; it was certain that the language used in it was Indian and its *akṣaras* (letters) were Sanskritic and already well known.

Colonel Tod collected a big hoard of Greek, Scythian, Parthian and Kuṣaṇa coins assignable to the period between 175 B.C. and 200 A.D. They were bilingual. On the one side they bore a legend in Greek. On the other side there was as yet undeciphered legend in *Kharoṣṭhī*. After some speculation in 1824 Tod declared that the script and the language used on the other side of the coins were Sassanian, perhaps in view of the fact that the foreigners, whose coins he had collected, were closely associated with the Sassanians.[1] In 1830 A.D. General Ventura excavated the Mankiala stupa, which yielded a number of coins and two *Kharoṣṭhī* inscriptions. He was, however, not able to read them.[2] Sir Alexander

[1] *Indische Palæographie.*
[2] Vol. III², pp. 31, 76.
[3] Bühler, *Indian Studies*, Vol. III², 31.
[4] Cunningham, *Inscripiions of Aśoka* (C. II. 1 pl. 27.
[5] Senart *Inscriptions de Piyadasi* I. 36.
[6] *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 56, 74.
[7] *Epigraphia Indica*, II, p. 368.

Burns also collected a large number of coins bearing Greek and *Kharoṣṭhī* legends. He could read the Greek legends, but he could not discover any clue to decipherment of the *Kharoṣṭhī* legends.[1]

In 1833 Prinsep conjectured that on one side of the coin of Appolodotos the script was Pahlavi[2] and that the script of the Manikiala inscriptions was Pali (*Brāhmī*).[3] In support of the latter part of the conjecture he maintained that *Kharoṣṭhī* was the cursive form of Pali (*Brāhmī*) used by clerks and businessmen.[4] A further study of the script compelled him to change his views.

Ch. Masson while engaged in the archæological researches in Afghanistan observed that the Greek legend on one side of the coins was identical with the *Kharoṣṭhī* legend on the other side of the coins. It was a great step forward and it made the task of deciphering the *Kharoṣṭhī* script easier. By conjecturing and ultimately fixing the Prakrit equivalent for Greek terms he read the *Kharoṣṭhī* legends and recognized the *Kharoṣṭhī* signs on the coins of Menander, Appolodotos and Harmeus. He conveyed the results of his investigations to Prinsep.[5]

Prinsep followed the researches of Masson. He was able to read twelve names and six titles of the Greek kings in the *Kharoṣṭhī* scripts. He fixed the direction of the script from the right to the left. He regarded the *Kharoṣṭhī* as of the Semitic origin. But he committed a mistake regarding the language of the *Kharoṣṭhī* script. He thought that its language was Pahlavi. This mistake obstructed the further progress of decipherment.[6] In 1838 he realised, however, that the language was Pali (Prakrit). The determination of the language further facilitated the work of decipherment. He could now read seventeen *Kharoṣṭhī* characters.[7] Next six signs were read by

[1] Ojha: *Prāchina Lipimālā*, p. 40.
[2] *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 313.
[3] Ibid, Vol. III, p. 318.
[4] Ibid, p. 319.
[5] Prinsep's *Indian Antiquities* I. 178-185, II. 128-143.
[6] *J.A.S.B.* Vol. II, p. 313.
[7] Prinsep's *Indian Antiquities*, II. 125-142.

E. Norris and the rest by Cunningham. Thus the reading of the *Kharoṣṭhī* alphabet was complete on the coins.[1] As regards the reading of independent and bigger inscriptions in *Kharoṣṭhī*, with the help of the knowledge gained from the reading of legends on the coins, the Shahbazgarhi pillar inscriptions of Aśoka and the bilingual (both in *Brāhmi* and *Kharoṣṭhī*) Kangra inscriptions were read satisfactorily except a few ligatures. The Śaka inscriptions were read with greater ease and so was the manuscript of the *Dhammapada* from Khotan. As already pointed out, some very cursive forms of the individual *Kharoṣṭhī* characters and a few of the ligatures still defied certain decipherment and a number of Parthian and Kuṣaṇa inscriptions could not be read with certitude. The credit of preparing a systematic comparative table of the *Kharoṣṭhi* alphabet again goes to Bühler.

4. *The Decipherment of the Indus Valley Script.*

In the absence of any bilingual inscription, having one of its version in the Indus Valley script and the other in some already deciphered script, the Indus Valley script has remained a puzzle and it will continue to be so until some effective clue to its reading is discovered. Under the circumstances, the decipherment of the Indus valley sctipt is in the stage of conjectural attempts at it. Some very important attempts in this direction are briefly referred to below :

(1) Meriggi thought that the Indus Valley inscriptions consist of ideographs. He regarded every single symbol as an ideogram[2],

(2) Hunter[3] and Langdon[4] considered the Indus Valley script as the proto-type of the *Brāhmī* script. Hunter

[1] Prinsep. *Indian Antiquities,* Vol. I, pp. 175-185; II, pp. 125-142; H. H. Wilson, *Ariana Antiqua,* 242 ft; *J.A.S.B.* XXIII, 714. Cunningham, *A.S.R.I,* VIII.

[2] P. Meriggi, *Zur Indusschrift,* Zeitschur, *D. Veutschen Morgenl, Gesellshaft,* 1934.

[3] G. R. Hunter: *The Script of Harappa and Mohenjodaro and its connection with other scripts,* 1934.

[4] *Mohenjodaro and the Indus Civilization,* Vol. II. pp. 423-24.

followed the scientific method of tabulating every occurrence of each sign. He claimed that by this process he obtained the interpretation of certain symbols, for instance, the ordinal suffix, the oblative and the dative terminations, the numeral signs and the determinatives for the words, 'slave' and 'son'. The similarity between the two scripts is, however, only external and unless the sound values for signs in the Indus Valley resembling the *Brāhmī* characters are fixed beyond doubt no absolute certitude can be claimed for this view.

(3) The German scholar Hrozny, who read the Hittite hieroglyphic inscription in Asia Minor, maintained that the Hittite and the Indus Valley scripts were similar and the latter can be read as the former. Hrozny arrived at far-reaching conclusions, but they are considerably weakened by a number of hypothetical statements. By selection and elimination he recognized one hundred and ten symbols as the most important phonetic signs—a large number for any phonetic or alphabetic system of writing. By further sifting he concluded that out of these signs eighty-six stood for six sounds only and forty-five signs for four sounds *si*, *se*, *sa* and *s*. Albright expressed his opinion on the work of Hrozny thus: "while acknowledging Hrozny's brilliancy as a decipherer, one cannot help feeling that he has tackled too difficult a task".

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[1] David Diringer, *Alphabet*, *p*. 85, 86.

CHAPTER V

WRITING MATERIALS

The selection of materials for writing depended mainly on two factors—(1) the availability of suitable materials in different parts of the country, though when a material became current in one part of the country it travelled to other parts also and (2) the natnre of documents, e.g., long books and ordinary correspondence were written on pliable, soft and perishable materials whereas religious edicts, eulogy of kings, legal documents etc. were engraved or incised on durable materials like stone, copper, iron, silver etc. These materials are mentioned below with relevant details about them.

1. *Bhūrjaptara* (Birch-bark)

One very common material for writing books and long documents in ancient India was birch-bark. It was the inner bark of the tree called *Bhūrja (*Baetula bhojpattr). The Himalayan regions produced this material in abundance. Originally it was used in the north-western part of India[1] but later on it travelled to other parts of India and to Central Asia, though in the south, on account of the abundance of palm-leaves, it could never become very popular.

The earliest mention of brick-bark as a writing material is found in the accounts of the Greek writer Q. Curtius[2], who writes that at the time of Alexander's invasion of India the Indians wrote on bark, though it should be noted that other Greek writers mention only cotton cloth or paper. The famous lexicon *Amarakoṣo*[3] refers to '*Bhūrja*' (birch-bark) under forest products. In the *Kumārasaṁbhava*[1] of Kālidāsa it is mentioned as a writing material and its description is given in the following words : "Where (in the Himalayas) the birch-barks, spotted

[1] Cf. Rajendralal Mitra, *Gough's Papers*, 17 ; *Kashmir Report*, 29, note 2.

[2] viii. 9.

[3] भूर्जे चर्मिमृदुत्वचौ । II. 4. 46.

like the skin of an elephant, were used by the celestial damsels for writing love-letters, on which letters were written with the solution of metals". The northern Buddist works frequently mention birch-bark as a writing material[2]. The most detailed description of its use is met with in Alberuni's India[3]. "In Central and Northern India people use the bark of the *tuz* tree, one kind of which is used as a cover for bows. It is called *Bhūrja*. They take a piece one yard long and as broad as outstretched fingures of the hand, or somewhat less, and prepare it in various ways. They oil and polish it so as to make it hard and smooth, and then they write on it. The proper order of the single leaves is marked by numbers. The whole book is wrapped up in a piece of cloth and fastened between two tablets of the same size. Such a book is called *puthī* (cf. *pusta*, *pustaka*). Their letters, and whatever else they have to write, they write on the bark of the *tuz* tree".

Birch-barks of various dimensions were found. They were cut into pieces of different sizes according to the needs and tastes of writers. According to Alberuni[4] the pieces generally measured one ell in length and one span in breadth. They were prepared for use by rubbing oil on them and getting them polished. Bark was written on with the aid of a reed pen and ink of a special kind. The middle portions of leaves were left unwritten and punched in order to get a string passed through them. They were fastened to two wooden plates, which were of the size of leaves and were also bored in the middle.

After the introduction of cheap and beautiful paper during the Moghal rule in India, the use of bark as a writing material declined, though on account of its sanctity it was used for writing sacred books and amulets to much later times. Amulets are still written on birch-bark.

[1] न्यस्ताक्षरा धातुरसेन यत्र भूर्जत्वचः कुञ्जरविन्दुशोणाः ।
व्रजन्ति विद्याधरसुन्दरीणामनङ्गलेखक्रिययोपयोगम् ॥ I. 7.

[2] Bathlingk, *Sanskrit Worterbuch in Kurzerer Fassung.*

[3] *India* (Sachau), I. 171.

[4] *India* (Sachau), I. 171.

The earliaest manuscript on bark is that of the *Kharoṣṭhi Dhammapoda* which was discovered in Khotan and belongs to the second or third century after Christ[1]. The Manuscript of the *Saṁyuktāgama* belongs to the fourth century A. D.[2] Next in chronological order are the inscribed 'twists' tied up with threads discovered by Masson in the stupas of Afghanistan[3]. The manuscripts of Bower and Godfrey collection are of about sixth century A.D. and those of Bakhshali arithmetic are of the eighth[4]. These ancient manuscript could survive only because they remained buried under sand and stone, whereas their other contemporary manuscripts perished. The latest manuscripts on birch-barks belonging to the fifteenth and subsequent centuries come from Kashmir and are found in the libraries at Poona, London, Oxford, Berlin, Viena. A member of manuscripts are still found in Kashmir, Orissa, and some other parts of India.

2. *Tāḍapatra* (Palm-leaves)

Another writing material, which was very common in ancient India, was *Tāḍa-patra (Tāla or Tāli)*. *Tāḍa-patra* was palm-leaf of the borassus flahelliformis, corypha umbraculifera and c. taliera. The Buddhist Jātakas refer to leaves (paṇṇa) as a writing material, which most probably were palm-leaves[5]. The biography of Hiuen-Tsang written by Hwuili contains a tradition according to which in the first Buddhist council held just after the death of Lord Buddha the Tripitakas were written on palm-leaves[6]. Palm was originally indigenous to Southern India, so we can infer that in the beginning its use for writing became common in the south and then gradually it spread to the other parts of India, though in Kashmir, part of the Punjab and Rajputana its use was negligible. That

[1] Ojha : *Prāchina Lipimālā*, p. 144.
[2] Ibid.
[3] H. H. Wilson : *Ariana Antiqua*, pl. 3 at p. 54, No. 11.
[4] J.A.S.B., 65, 225ff.
[5] *Kaṭāhakæ Jātaka ; Mahāsutasoma Jātaka ; Kāma Jātaka ; Chullakāliṅga Jātaka ; Ruru Jātaka* etc.
[6] Si-yu-ki (Tr. by Beal), p. 166-177.

the use of palm-leaves for writing, in certain parts of India, was earlier than the use of birch-bark is proved by the fact that the latter was cut into pieces corresponding to the former in shape and size. The Taxila copper-plate[1], belonging to the first century A.D., is also fashioned after a palm-leaf.

The earliest manuscript written on palm-leaves is that of a fragment of a drama, which roughly belong to the second century A. D.[2] The manuscripts discovered by Macartna in Kashgar can be assigned to the fourth cenury A.D.[3] The manuscripts of the '*Praiñā-pāramitā-hṛdayasūtra*' and the *Uṣṇīśa-vijayadhāriṇī*, which were originally prepared in Central India, travelled to Japan and now are preserved in the Hori-uzie monastery are of the sixth century A.D.[4] The manuscript of the *Skanda-purāṇa* now kept in the Durbar library at Kathmandu (Nepal) belongs to the seventh century A.D.[5] The Cambridge manuscript of the *Parameśvaratantra* is dated *Harṣa* era 252 (=Christian era 858)[6]. The manuscript of the Buddhist work '*Lankāvatāra*' is dated Newar era 28 (=906–7 A.D.)[7]. It should be observed here that the early manuscripts on palm-leaves are found mostly in the cold and dry countries and parts of India. No manuscript of a date earlier than the fifteenth century A.D. is found in the south due to the hot and humid climate of that part of India.

Palm-leaves were prepared for writing in a particular way. For writing books and permanent documents palm-leaves were first dried, then boiled or soaked in water, next dried again and in the end they were polished with a smooth stone or conch-shell and cut into proper pieces. Palm-leaves in their natural form were used for ordinary and daily

[1] *J.R.A.S.* 1863, 222, pl. 3.
[2] Published by Dr. Lūders (kleimere *Sanskrit-Texte*, Part I).
[3] *J.A.S.B.* LXVI, p. 218pl. 7.
[4] *Anecdota Oxoniancia* (Aryan Series), pls. 1-IV.
[5] *Catalogue of Palm-leaf and Selected Paper Manuscripts belonging to the Darbar Library*, Nepal ed. by Hara Prasad Shastri, English Intro, p. 52.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ojha, *Prāchinā Lipimālā*, p. 143.

purpose. The size of a prepared leaf varied from one to three feet in length and from one to four inches in breadrh. In northern India ink was used in writing on palm-leaves. In the south, however, letters were incised on leaves with a stilus ; then the leaves were besmeared with soot or powder of charcoal. The leaves of small length were punched on one side in the middle and those of considerable length on both the sides in the middle. Strings were passed through the holes in order to keep the leaves together. As palm-leaves were found in plenty in several parts of India, it was very widely used in the country. But with the introduction of cheap paper the use of palm-leaves diminished. In the primary schools, temples and country-side shops palm-leaves are still used for its sanctity and easy availability.[1]

3. *Paper.*

It has been a common opinion that paper was first introduced by the Muslims in India and that it was for the first time manufactured by the Chinese in 105 A. D.[2] Contrary to this view, Nearchos, a Greek write , who accompanied Alexander during his Indian campaign in 327 B. C. writes that the Indians were manufacturing writing paper out of cotton by pounding.[3] Sporadic references, like one in the "letter-writer" by king Bhoja of Dhārā in Malwa (eleventh century A. D.), also prove that paper was used for writing letters.[4]

The earliest manuscripts on paper were discovered in Central Asia at Kashgar and Kugier, written in the Gupta script of the fifth century A.D.[5] It was doubted by some scholars whether paper used for these manuscripts was of Indian origin or not. There is, however, no justification for it in view of the Greek evidence on the use of paper in

[1] Cf. Ojha : *Prāchinā Lipimālā*, p. 143.

[2] Barnet : *Antiquities of India*, p. 229.

[3] Strabo, XV, 717, Bühler confused cotton-paper with cotton-cloth (*Indian Palæography*, p. 98.).

[4] *Gough's Papers*, 16.

[5] *J.A.S.B.* 66, 215ff., 258f.

India in the fourth century B.C. Under the climatic conditions of India paper cannot survive for long. Hence, the paper manuscripts from Gujrat and Rajputana cannot be traced back to a time earlier than the fourteenth century A.D.

It is true that in ancient India paper was sparingly used in view of the cheap and easy availability of palmleaves and birch-bark, which had also the greater power of survival than crudely manufactured paper. Yet, there have been indigenous paper factories in India since ancient times long before the advent of the Muslims and the Europeans and they are still continuing in some parts of the country.[1] Paper-sheet were covered with a thin layer of rice or wheat pulp and then polished with conch-shells or stone-roller. This process was necessary so that ink may not penetrate roughly made paper. Paper was cut into pieces of convenient size. Writing on paper imitated writing on palmleaves. Writing pieces were punched in the middle[2] and fastened together by passing a string through the holes.

4. *Cotton Cloth.*

Cotton cloth was also used as a writing material in ancient India and it is still being used for special purposes. The specific terms used for it were 'paṭa', '*paṭikā*' or '*Kārpāsika paṭa*'.[3] The earliest mentions of '*paṭa*' are found in the Nasik inscriptions[4] of the Andhra period. Some of the metrical *Smṛtis* of later periods also refer to writing on cotton cloth.[5] Cloth like paper is also not very durable, as moisture weakens it and moths are very fond of it. Therefore, surviving documents on cotton-cloth are not very old. At *Śringeri-matha* some accounts written on cotton-cloth are two to three hundred years old. In the *Bṛhajjñanakoṣa* at

[1] Cf. Ojha: *Prāchinā Lipimālā*, p. 144.

[2] Specimens can be seen in the collection of ancient Jain Mss. in possession of the descendants of Seth Kalyanamalla Dhaddha at Ajmer.

[3] J. Jolly, *Rechtund Sitte, Grundriss*, II, 8, 114;

[4] *Nasik Inscriptions* No. 11A. B in *B. ASRWI*, 4, 104 ff,

[5] J. Jolly, *Rechtund Sitte, Grundriss*, II. 8, 114,

Jasalmer Bühler discovered a silk band with the list of the Jain sūtras written with ink.[1] Peterson found at Anhilvad Patan a manuscript of the Jain work '*Dharmavidhi*' of *Śriprabhasūrrī* dated V. E. 1418 (A.D. 1361-62).[2] The MS covers ninety-three leaves, thirteen inches broad. At present in Jain temples a number of papers are found, containg *maṇḍalas* and figures made at the time of the consecration of temples. In the learned families of the Brahmans also *paṭas* are available which contain '*Sarvatobhadra*', '*Lingatobhadra*' etc. *maṇḍalas* and the sketches of '*Mātṛkāsthāpana*', '*Grahasthāpana*' etc. In Rajputana there is a class of people who prepare almanac on long pieces of cloth.[3] In the south merchants and traders use cloth for the maintenance of permanent accounts.[4]

Like paper cloth was also made smooth and non-poreous by applying a thin layer of wheat or rice pulp on it. After it got dried it was polished with a conch-shell on stone. Letters were written on it with black ink. In Mysore cloth is blackened with tamarind-seed pulp and charcoal powder. On dried pieces of such cloth letters are made with chalk or stealite. *Maṇḍalas* and figures on cloth are made with the powder of cereals and dyes also.

5. *Wooden Boards.*

The earliest mention of wooden boards and bamboo chips as writing materials is found in the *Vinayapiṭaka* in connection with the prohibition of the incision of precepts on religious suicide.[5] The next reference to them occurs in the *Jātakas*. The *Jātakas* call the writing boards as '*phalaka*', which were used by beginners for learning alphabets.[6] Bamboo chips (*Śalākas*) with some marks or letters served as pass-ports for the Buddhist monks.[7] According to the

[1] *Indian Palæography*, p. 93.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Cf. Ojha: *Prāchinā Lipimālā*, p. 146.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Rhys David: *Buddhist India*, p. 108-9.
[6] *Jātaka* No. 125 (*Kaṭahaka Jātaka*).
[7] Burnouf, *Introd, a l'histome du Bouddisme*, 259 note.

Lalitavistara sandal wood boards were used in schools like slates.[1] The epigraphical records of the Śakas of *Mahārāstra* also refer to the use of wooden boards (*phalakas*) in the guild-halls for recording agreements in connection with loans.[2] The *Kātyāyanasmṛti* a work on legal procedure, prescribes that plaints should be entered on boards with chalk (*pāṇḍu-lekha*).[3] In the *Daśakumāra-charita*, a Sanskrit fiction, Apaharavarman wrote his declara ion addressed to his lady love on a piece of varnished wood.[4] In Burma Buddhist manuscripts were written on slips of wood covered with gold or silver lacquer, the letters being black.[5] Specimens of these MSS. are found in the British Museum and similar libraries in Europe.[6] Though no examples of such MSS. are found in India at present, there are indications that the Indians too used wooden boards for literary purposes.[7] It is learnt from Winternitz that the Bodleian Library possessed a Mss. from Assam written on wooden boards.[8] In northern India cases are found where poor people copy religious works on wooden boards with chalk. Even to-day students in infant classes, astrologers and country merchants write on wooden boards with chalk.

6. *Leather.*

In view of the easy availability of natural writing materials in India in the form of leaves, barks and wood, leather as a writing material did not attract the attention of the ancient Indians.

Moreover, the Hindus regarded leather, except deer-skin and tiger-skin used by asetics, as impure and would not associate it with the art of writing which had a sacred origin in India. In Western Asia, Egypt and Europe where nature

[1] *Lalitavistara*, X (Eng, tr. p.181-5).
[2] *Nasik Ins.* No. 7, 1.4 in *B. ASRWI*, 4, 102.
[3] Burnell, *Elements of South Indian Palæography*. 87 note 2.
[4] Uchchhvāsa-II.
[5] Burnell, *South Indian Palæography*, p. 87.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Bühler, *Indian Palæography*, p. 93.
[8] Ibid.

did not supply ready-made writing materials and people had no aversion to the use of animal materials, leather was in common use for writing.

There are, yet, some sporadic references to the use of leather in Indian literature. D'Alwis writes that some Buddhist works include skin among writing materials[1]. A Samskrit work *Vāsavodattā* of Subandhu contains a passage from which it can be inferred that in Subandhu's time skin was used for writing.[2] It should be pointed out here that so far no leather MS. has been discovered in India. In Petersbug collection there are, however, some pieces of leather from Kashgar inscribed with Indian characters, though it cannot be mentioned, that these fragments reached Central Asia from India, because Indian characters were introduced there and they were used by the local people. The only specimen of leather, a blank piece of parchment, was found lying among the MSS. in the Jain library at Jasalmer called *Bṛhajjñāna-Koṣa*.[3]

7. *Stone.*

Ever since man made first scratch on the wall of a cave he was impressed by the permanence of his art. 'Writing on Stone' became a symbol of durability. When the art of writing became common, documents, which were supposed to be of importance and expected to be permanent, came to be engraved on stone. The Buddhist emperor Aśoka, who belonged to the third century B.C., specifically states that he got his edicts engraved on stone, so that they may last for a long time[4]. In spite of the introduction of other pliable materials for writing the use of stone for permanent documents has continued even upto the present time. Stone as a medium of writing has been used in the following forms :

[1] Introduction to *Kachchāyana*, p. 27; Bühler, *Indian Palæography*, p. 95.

[2] विश्वे गणयतो विधातुः शशिकठिनीखण्डेन तमो मसिश्यामेऽजिन इव नभसि संसारस्यातिशून्यत्वाच्छून्यविन्दव इव *Vāsavadattā* (Hall's Edition), p. 182.

[3] Bühler, *Indian Palæography*, p. 95.

[4] चिलंथितिका च होतूतीति । Aśokan PE II (Topera version).

(1) Rocks smoothed or sometimes rough[1]
(2) Pillars.[2]
(3) Slabs[3].
(4) Pedestal[4] or the back of images[5].
(5) Rims and lids of vases, caskets etc.[6]
(6) Prisms of crystal.[7]
(7) The walls of temples,[8] the pavement[9], and the pillars of colonnades[10].
(8) Caves[11].

As regards the contents of writing on stone, they included the following varieties :

(1) Royal edicts or proclamations.[12]
(2) Royal eulogy (*Praśasti*).[13]
(3) Treaties between kings.[14]
(4) Agreements.[15]
(5) Dedications.[16]
(6) Commemorations.[17]
(7) Donations.[18]
(8) Grants.[19]

[1] Aśokan RE. Hultzsch, *Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. I.
[2] Aśokan PE. ibid ; *Besanagar Garuda Pillar Ins.* Lüders *List* No. 669.
[3] *Ayodhyā Stone Ins. Ep. Ind.* XX P. 57.
[4] *Patna Image Ins.* Lüders *List*, Nos. 957-58.
[5] Ibid.
[6] *Piprahwa Buddhist Vase Ins..* Lüder's *List* No. 931.
[7] An ins. from Bhattiprolu Stupa, *Ep. Ind.* Vol. II. p. 328.
[8] Lüder's *List* Nos. 14, 21, 63, 68, 77 etc.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Bhandarkar's *List*, Nos. 1712, 1713 etc.
[12] *Aśokan Ins.* Hultzsch. *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* Vol. I.
[13] *Hathigumpha Ins.* of Khāravela, *Ep. Ind.* XX, p. 72f. *Allahabad Pillar Ins.* of Samudragupta, Fleet. C.I.I., Vol. III. No. 1.
[14] Bühler : *Indian Palæography*, p. 96.
[15] Ibid.
[16] *Ind. Ant.* XXXVI, p. 117ff ; *Arch. Sur. Ind. A.R.* 1908-09 p. 126.
[17] Fleet : *C.I.I.* Vol. III, p. 92ff.
[18] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. IV, p. 55fff. ; *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XXI, p. 60f.
[19] Fleet : *C.I.I.* Vol. III, p. 126f.

(9) Poetical effusions.[1]
(10) Literary works.[2]
(11) Sometimes big religious works.[3]

Before letters were incised or drilled on stone, a particular rock, slab or a piece of stone was selected, chiselled smooth and then polished by rubbing. Exceptions are, however, found where rough stone was also used for writing. Straight lines were drawn on the stone, next, some good writer wrote on them with ink or dye and finally the engraver incised or drilled the letters. To make the stone look artistic adequate margins were left on the sides, top and bottom. Sometimes area to be engraved was made lower than the rims on four sides. If during the process of engraving stone was chipped off the hollow so created was filled with some plastic and then letters were engraved on them. In the beginning and at the end of document engraved generally some auspicious or religious symbols were also engraved.

8. *Bricks.*

Though in Mesopetamia and other countries of Western Asia the ancient peoples used bricks very commonly for writing purposes, in ancient India the use of bricks for writing was rather sporadic. Cunningham,[4] Führer, and other archaeologists discovered specimens of inscribed bricks in different parts of India, containing a single or a few letters and originally set up in the walls or the niches of temples or on the pedestals of images. Sometimes religious texts were also inscribed on bricks. A specimen of such inscription was discovered by Hoe in the Uttara Pradesh (then North West Provinces) where Buddhist sutras were engraved.[5] A number of inscriptions on

[1] Lüders *List* Nos. 992, 997, 998, 1000, 1100, 1125, 1126, 1124, 1146 etc.

[2] The *Harikelināṭaka* of Chahumāna king Vigraha IV and the *Lalita-Vigraharājanāṭaka* of his court poet Somadeva, *I.A.* XX. 201ff.

[3] The *Unnatisikhapurāṇa*—a Jain work of V.E. 1226 is engraved on a rock near Bijolia in Mewad (Ojha : *Prachina Lipimālā* p. 150 note 6).

[4] C. *ASR.* I, 97 ; 5, 102.

[5] *Proc. ASB.* 1896, 99ff.

bricks are preserved in the Archaeological Museum at Mathura, which can be assigned to the first century B.C. on palæographical grounds. Besides bricks, earthen wares[1] and earthen seals[2] were also used as media of writings. The process of inscribing on bricks, earthen pots and earthen seals was this: The characters were obviously scratched on moist clay before it was dried and baked.

9. *Metals.*

More than stone and brick metal was a lasting and handy material for writing for the types of documents similar to those which were incised or drilled on stone and brick. It should be, however, observed here that stone and brick have been almost uniformly used since very ancient times down to the present day, whereas metal was sparingly used in early times and it became more frequently used in later periods. Among the metals used for writing gold, silver, copper, brass, bronze, iron and tin may be included.

(1) *Gold.* This metal, being costly, was rarely used for writing. Buddhist *Jātakas* refer, however, frequently to the inscription of the important family records of wealthy merchants, royal edicts, poetic verses and moral maxims on gold.[3] But it can be easily conceded that the Jātakas were giving an idealised picture of society in which elements of imagination were playing important part. Burnell states that gold was used for royal letters and land-grants also.[4] Cunningham discovered a gold plate at the Gangu Stupa near Taxila with a votive inscription in *Kharoṣṭhi*.[5] Two leaves of gold were found at the village Hmazwa in Burma on which was inscribed the Buddhist formula '*Ye dhammā hetuprabhavā* etc.' followed by Pali verse. Palæographically they belong to the fourth or the fifth century A. D.[6]

[1] *Ind. Ant.* Vol. XIV, p. 75.
[2] *ASRI*, 1903-4, plates 60-62.
[3] *Ruru-Jātaka; Kurudhamma-Jātaka; Tesakun-Jātaka.*
[4] B. *Elements of South Indian Palæography*, 90-93.
[5] C. *ASR* II 129, pl. 59.
[6] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. V, p. 121.

(2) *Silver.* It is though much cheaper than gold it is less frequently referred to as a writing material. Very few inscriptions on silver have been discovered so far. Specimens of small MSS. and official documents inscribed on silver are still preserved. One of them comes from the ancient stupa at Bhattiprolu.[1] Another was discovered at Taxila.[2] Some Jain temples even to-day contain silver plates on which are inscribed sacred verses like '*namokāra mantras*' and *tāntrika* formula like 'riṣi-maṇḍala-yantra'.[3]

(3) *Copper.* The most commonly used metal for writing was copper and it has been in use since very ancient times. An inscribed copper plate or copper piece was called *tāmra-paṭa, tāmrapattra, tāmraśāsana, śāsanapattra* or *dānapattra* according to the contents of the inscription. The types of documents inscribed on copper were almost the same as inscribed on stone, except in the case of land-grants, which were almost invariably inscribed on copper and were ceremoniously handed over to donee to serve as title-deeds.[4]

As regards the earliest use of copper for writing Fa-hien states that during the course of his travel in India (c.400 A.D.) he found many Buddhist monasteries in possession of grants engraved on copper, some of which belonged to the time of Buddha.[5] Nothing certain can be said in this connection in the absence of any positive confirmation. But it should be pointed out that the discovery of the Sohgaura copper-plate[6] belonging to the Mauryan period on the ground of palæography, renders the statement of Fa-hien plausible. Another Buddhist pilgrim Hiuen Tsiang, who visited India in the seventh century A. D. writes that king Kaniṣka convened a Buddhist assembly under the inspiration of *Pārśva*, which prepared three commentaries— (1) the *Upadeśa-śāstra* on the

[1] B. *Indian Palæography*, p. 95.
[2] *J. R. A. S.* 1914, 975-6; 1915, p. 192.
[3] Ojha : *Prāchina Lipimālā* p. 152 foot-note 5.
[4] Cf. B. *Indian Palæography*, p. 95.
[5] *Si-yu-ki* (Beal) I, xxxviii.
[6] *Proc. ASB*, 1894, p. I.

Sūtrapiṭaka (2) *the Vinaya-Vibhāṣā-śāstra* on the *Vinaya-piṭaka* and (3) the *Abhidharma-Vibhāṣa-śāstra* on the *Abhidharmapitaka* which were engraved on copper-plates and kept in stone caskets; the caskets were placed in the stupas built over them.[1] No excavator's spade has been able to unearth these caskets so far. There is a similar story preserved regarding the Vedic commentary of *Sāyaṇa* being engraved on copper.[2] Burnell regards this story to be untrustworthy without sufficient reasons.[3] The possibility of religious and literary works being engraved on copper is rendered very strong in view of the existence of copper MSS. of literary works at Tripatty, though belonging to a comparatively later period.[4] Some specimens of books inscribed on copper from Burma and Ceylon are preserved in the British Museum.[5] The list of other types of copper inscriptions discovered in India is very long. It may be observed that the use of copper for writing was not very frequent upto the sixth century A.D. During the subsequent centuries down to the 12th it became very common and then it again dwindled after the advent of the Muslims in India.

Copper-plates were prepared in a variety of ways. There is a single instance of the Sohgaura copper-plate which was cast in a mould of sand, into which the letters together with emblems had been previously scratched with a stilus or a pointed piece of wood. On this plate both the letters and the emblems appear in relievo.[6] The majority of copper-plates were hammered into various shapes and sizes, a fact which is proved by the existence of distinct traces of blows on them. Copper-plates of different thickness and size were prepared. Some of them were so thin that they could be bent double and they hardly weigh a few ounces, whereas

[1] Cf. B. *Elements of South Indian Palæography*, p. 86.
[2] Max Müller, R.*I.* XVII.
[3] *South Indian Palæography.*
[4] B. *Indian Palæography*, p. 95.
[5] *J. Pali T. Soc.* 1883, 136 ff.
[6] Fleet, *J.R.A.S.*, 1907, p. 510 ff.

some of them were very thick and heavy and they weighed about nine pounds and more.[1] The factors which determined size were two-fold — (1) the size of commonly used writing material in the district where the copper-plate was issued and (2) the content of the document to be inscribed, that is the size of the draft prepared by the clerk.

If the models before the smith were palm-leaves, copper-plates imitated the length and narrowness of those leaves; if birch-bark was the model, the breadth of the copper-plates increased and they were made almost square in size. Broadly speaking, copper-plates in the south imitated palm-leaves and in the north birch-bark except the Taxila plate which is modelled upon a palm-leaf. It is evident from the copper-plates of Gujrat and northern India that with the growing size of the *Praśastis* (eulogies) of kings, the size of the copper-plates also increased[2]

The number of plates for one *tāmraśāsana* depended upon the size of document. If more than one copper-plates were required for a document they were fastened together by copper-rings passed through round holes in the plates. In case there was a single ring the hole was generally made in the left side of the plate; when there were two rings, the holes went through the lower part of the first plate and the upper part of the second plate, and so on alternatively. Rings served the purpose of threads which kept various palm-leaves together and made the copper-plates as one volume which could be opened conveniently.[3]

Sufficient margins were left on the copper-plates. Lines generally ran parallel to the broadest side of the plate. First

[1] The Taxila plate weighing 3.3/4 ounces was found bent double; Alina plates of Silāditya VI of Valabhi, taken together, weigh 17 pounds, 3.3/4 ounces, Fleet, *G. I., C.* 1 *I*, 3, 172.

[2] Cf. The inscriptions of the kings of Valabhi, the inscriptions of some of the Gupta kings and the inscriptions of the mediaeval dynasties.

[3] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. I, p. 1ff (the Kasakundi grant of the 8th century is engraved on eleven plates and the Hirahadagalli grant of the 4th century on eight plates).

of all an expert writer wrote on the copper-plate the document prepared by relevant authorities with ink in legible and beautiful letters. Next a black-smith or a gold-smith incised the letters with a chisel, very rarely with a graver. Sometimes letters were formed of dots instead of lines.[1] From the minute letters on many of the southern copper-plates, it can be inferred that first the copper-plates in question were besmeared with chalk, then a writer traced the letters on them with a pointed piece of iron and lastly a smith incised the letters with a fine instrument. For the protection of documents the rims of the plates were raised and thickened; for the same purpose the first side of the first plate and the second side of the last were left blank.[2]

On royal documents official seals were attached to the plates in various ways. Sometimes it was impressed upon the metal piece which covered the joint of the ring fastening the plates together.[3] Very often the royal seal was cast separately and the inscription and emblem thereon were raised on a countersunk surface.[4] In some cases it was incised on the copper-plate itself.[5] Generally the seals attached to the copper-plates were made of copper, though the royal seal for other purposes was, in rare circumstances, made of gold, as it is evident from the statement of Bāṇa that Harṣavardhana used a golden seal.[6]

(4) *Brass.* As a writing material brass was seldom used for independent inscriptions. We have only very small inscriptions on the pedestals of big brass statues or on the back of small brass statues. The earliest date for such statues is the seventh century A.D. and they almost all belong to

[1] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. IV, p. 56.

[2] Cf. Fleet: *Gupta Inscriptions*, C11, 3, 68 note 6.

[3] Cf. The inscriptions of the *Paramāras*, the *Chālukyas* and the *Senas.*

[4] The inscriptions of *Bhoja*, *Mahendrapāla* and *Vināyakapāla* of the Pratihāra dynasty (*Ind. Ant.* Vol. XV, p. 112, 140).

[5] The inscriptions of the *Paramāras* of Malwa.

[6] *Harṣacharita* (Nirṇayasāgara Press, Ed.) p. 227.

Jainism. In some of the Jain temples brass-plates are found on which religious formulas are inscribed.[1]

(5) *Bronze*. As regards this metal only on bronze-bells in temples the names of donors and the dates of donation are found inscribed.[2] Like brass it was rarely used for independent writing.

(6) *Iron*. Though iron was very commonly used for implements and weapons and other human needs, its use was sporadic so far as writing was concerned. There is only one instance of the Mihrauli Iron Pillar Inscription,[3] situated near the Qutub Minar near Delhi, where a long *Praśasti* is inscribed on iron. There are a few examples where small inscriptions are found on the tridents of Śiva and canons made of iron.[4] The spare use of iron for writing was perhaps due to the fact that it was ordinarily subject to rusting and decay; the Mihrauli Iron Pillar is one of rare exceptions where iron was made rust-proof.

(7) *Tin*. This metal being rare in India was rarely used for writing. There is only one specimen of writing on tin; the British Museum possesses a Buddhist MSS. inscribed on tin.[5]

10. *Ink*.

For writing on hard materials like stone, bricks, metals etc., where engravement or drilling was necessary, ink or any kind of dying was not imperative. In such cases chisel or stilus would do, though later on in some cases pigment was used. But for writing on soft materials like birch-bark, palm-leaves, paper, cloth, leather etc. some kind of ink or dye was employed.

The terms used in India for the ink were '*masī*' or '*maśī*'. These words frequently occur in the *Gṛhyasūtras*, which

[1] Specimens of brass inscriptions are found on the statues in the Jain temples of Achalgadh at the Abu mountains.

[2] Only very late specimens of bronze inscriptions are available.

[3] Fleet: *C.I.E.* Vol. III, p. 139.

[4] Such specimens belong to the fifteenth and the subsequent centuries.

[5] *J. Pali T. Soc.* 1883, 134ff.

were definitely written before the Christian Era. As regards the derivation of the term '*masī*' or '*masi*'' it is derived from the Sanskrit root 'mas' (hiṁsāyāṁ) crushing or pounding[1]. Because in the preparation of ink its ingredients were pounded and mixed, the term '*masī*' was used for it. In the Hindi word '*masalna*' (crushing) the original sense of the term is still preserved. In some parts of India the word used for ink is '*melā*'. On the basis of this usage Benefy, Hincks and Weber tried to derive the term 'melā' from the Greek word 'melas'[2]. Bühler suggested that the word 'melā' is derived from the vernacular 'mailā' (dirty or black) and it is unnecessary to search its foreign origin. But a more plausible derivation of the term 'melā' is from the Sanskrit root 'mel' (to mix). The word 'melā' obviously means the state of being mixed, implying the mixing of many ingredients in the preparation of ink. The word 'melā' in the sense of ink was used by Sanskrit writers also. For instance Subandhu uses the expression. '*melanandayate*' (becomes an ink-stand).[3] In Sanskrit lexicons the words used for 'ink-stand' are '*melananda*', '*melaṇdhu*,' '*melandhuka*' etc. which also shows that the word 'melā' was very well known to the Sanskrit writers.[4] The word '*masī*' was, however, more frequently used and the words for ink-stand very often employed were '*masipātra* '*masibhāṇḍa*', and '*masikupikā*'

The use of ink by the Indians in the fourth century B.C. is also evidenced by the Greek writers Nearchos and Q. Curtius[5] who state in their accounts that the Indians wrote on paper and cotton cloth, obviously suggesting that ink was used by the writers. Some of earliest epigraphical records too point to the same fact. In some of the Aśokan edicts dots are sometimes substituted for loops in the formation of certain letters which suggests that ink was used when edicts were

[1] Bothlingk and Roth, *Sanskrit Worterbuch*, sub voce '*Masi*'.

[2] Zachariae, Nachrichten Gott. Ges. Wiss., 1893, 235ff.

[3] Bothlingk and Roth, Sanskrit Worterbuch, sub hac voce.

[4] मेला मसीजलं पत्राञ्जनं च स्यान्मसिद्वयोः इति त्रिकाण्डशेषः quoted on the *Amarakosa*, III. 5. 10.

[5] Strabo, XV. 717 *Hist*. *Alex*. VIII. 6.

engraved.[1] The earliest specimen of writing with ink is found in the relic-vase of the stupa at Andher, which can be, at the latest, assigned to the second century B.C.[2] A more extensive use of ink is found in the *Kharoṣṭhī* MSS from Khotan detable from the first century A.D. From the same century Afghanistan also yields specimens of ink-writing on the twists of birch-barks and earthen vessels. Slightly later MSS in the *Brāhmī* characters written with ink on birch-bark and palm-leaves are also found.[3] A few specimens of painted inscriptions are there in the Ajāntā Caves[2].

Different kinds of ink were used, out of which the black one was the most common. It was of two varieties ordinary or delible for temporary purposes and permanent or indeliable for writing MSS and documents of permanent value. The first variety was made of some kind of pulverised charcoal mixed with water, gum, sugar or with some other stickly substance. The permanent variety was prepared from lac mixed with water, borax, lodhra (a tree with white flowers) and lamp-suits of sesamum oil all boiled into strong solution. This kind of ink was indelible not affected by water and damp.[5] In Kashmir, for writing on birch-bark, ink was manufactured out of charcoal made from almonds and boiled in cow's urine[6]. Ink so prepared was absolutely free from damage when MSS were periodically washed in water-tubes. Ink was introduced in the South rather late.

Of coloured varieties red was the most common and yellow was also sometimes used. The Puranic texts refer to the donation of MSS. written with coloured inks[7]. The Jain writers of northern India also very often employed coloured inks.[8] Red ink was made either from *alaktaka* (red dye) or

[1] Bühler, *Indian Studies* III, 6ff, 69.
[2] Bühler, *Indian Palæography*, p. 98.
[3] Ibid.
[4] B. *ASRWI.* 4, plate 59.
[5] Ojha : *Prāchina Lipimala*, p. 155.
[6] Burnell : *South Indian Pālæography*, p. 93.
[7] *Hemādri, Dānakhaṇḍa*, 549ff.
[8] Cf. Facsimiles in Rajendralal Mitra's notices of Sanskrit MSS, 3, pl. I.

hingula (lead or minium). These materials were solved in water with rasin or some other sticky substance. Red ink was mostly used in the MSS. for marking the medial signs and margins on the right and the left sides of the text. Sometimes the endings of chapters, stops and the phrases like 'so and so said thus' were written with red ink. Green and yellow inks were fashionable with some Jain writers, who wrote the ending of chapters with them.[1] Somadeva, the author of the *Kathāsarit-sāgara* refers to writing with blood,[2] which Burnell regarded as a transparent fiction of the writer. It should be observed that Somadeva mentions writing with blood only in the absence of ink in a forest. Sometimes abnormal persons, to show the solemnity of their purpose and iron determination, wrote their vows with blood. But such instances are very rare.

For artistic writings on paintings or in preparing the MSS. of sacred books or even literary works for the use of the rich patrons gold and silver inks were used.[3] Literary evidences refer to the use of these inks in ancient times, though available specimens belong to much later times.

11. *Instruments.*

Instruments for writting, in general, were called '*lekhanī*', a word which occurs as early as in the Great Epics of India.[4] It is, however, a generic word and is used variously in the sense of a pen, a stilus, a pencil or a brush made of reed, wood, iron, fibres or hairs. The rationale behind this wide use of this term is that writing implied both engraving and painting or writing materials.

Other words denoting writing instruments are as follows:

(1) *Varṇaka.* The literal meaning of this terms is 'maker of a letter'. It was used in the sense of a pen. In the *Lalitavistara* it is referred to as a small stick

[1] Ojha: *Prāchin Lipimālā*, p. 156.
[2] तां कथामात्मशोणितैः। अटव्यां मष्यभावाच्च लिलेख स महाकविः। I. 8.3.
[3] Cf. Collection of Seth Kalyanamalla of Ajmer (Ojha: *Prāchina Lipimālā*, p. 156).
[4] Cf. *BRW.* and *BW.* sub hac Voce.

without a slit, which was used by school-children to draw letters on the writing-board.[1]

(2) *Varṇikā.* It is a variant of '*Varṇaka*' generally found in Sanskrit lexicons.[2]

(3) *Varṇavartikā.* It was a coloured pencil. It is mentioned in the *Daśakumāracharita.*[3]

(4) *Tuli* or *Tulikā.* It was generally used in the sense of a brush.[4]

(5) *Śalākā.* It meant a stilus or engraver.[5]

In connection wlth the art of writing other instruments were compass and ruler. The former was used mainly by astrologers in preparing horoscopes containing various circles and cross-circles, and occassionally, by a few writers for making artistic figures at the end of the chapters of books. Compasses used for these purposes were highly refined. For drawing straight and parallel lines ruler was also employed. It was a piece of wood with strings fixed at equal distances. It was called '*rekhāpaṭi* or '*samāsapaṭi*'.[6]

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[1] *Lalitavistara*, Ch. X. pp. 181-185 (Eng. tr.).

[2] *Amarakosa*, III. 5. 38 ; *Medinī*, under '*Varṇaka*'.

[3] *Uchchhvāsa* II.

[4] *Amarakosa*, III. 10. 32.

[5] अयस्कान्तमणि शलाका········ *Mālati-Mādhava*. I. 2.

[6] Ojha : *Prāchina Lipimālā*, p. 157.

CHAPTER VI.

PROFESSION OF WRITING AND ENGRAVING.

In India alphabets were invented by literateurs, teachers and priests for literary and religious purposes. There is no doubt that the invention of alphabets required some knowledge of linguistics and phonetics and as such it could be undertaken only by experts educated and cultured. That is why, for a very long time, the art of writing remained a special preserve of literary and priestly experts, mainly belonging to the Brahman class. So long as the extent and use of literacy was limited, there was no need of a class of professional writers, who would write for the sake of earning their livelihood. With the evolution and expansion of society and the bifurcation of professions writing also developed as a profession. In the ancient literature of India there are ample indications that at an early period there existed a class or caste of professional writers. They were designated differently for various reasons—chronological, artistic and official. They are briefly dealt with as follows :

1. *Lekhaka.*

The earliest term used for writers in general was '*lekhaka*' (one who writes). This word and terms allied to it[1] are found in the Great Epics of India—the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*.[2] The use of these terms in the epics indicate that the art and the profession of writing both were in exixtence when the epics were composed. The early Pali literature yields a large number of evidences regarding the profession of writing. For instance, in the *Vinayapiṭaka* 'writing' is praised as one of the most dlstinguished arts ;[3] the sisters of the order are allowed

[1] *Likh*, *lekha*, *lekhana* etc.

[2] For most important passages connected with 'writing' see the *St. Petersburg Dictionary* under the words mentioned in the footnote No. 1 on p. 134, *Das Mahābhārata*, 185ff. by J. Dahlmann.

[3] iv. 7.

to learn the art of writing, obviously not as a pastime but as a useful occupation of copying the sacred texts ;[1] in a discussion as to what career a lad should adopt, his parents opine that if he adopts a profession of a writer, he will live in ease and comfort, though his fingures will ache.[2] The *Mahāvagga*[3] and the *Jātakas*[4] frequently mention official letters which involved specialised professional knowledge of writing. Even MSS. (*Pothaka*) are mentioned twice,[5] the preparation of which required professional writers. Rhys David's views[6] that writing industry was not known when the early Buddhist literature was under preparation, are based upon very meagre data and cannot stand examination. In the subsequent literature of India the word '*lekhaka*' has been used both in the general sense of a writer and in the specific sense of a professional writer.

As regards epigraphical evidence regarding the profession of writing and the use of term 'lekhaka' an early reference to it is found in one of the Sanchi inscriptions.[7] The word '*lekhaka*' here is evidently used to denote the profession of the donor. Bühler translated it as 'copyist of MSS' 'writer, clerk', though he doubted his own translation.[8] In a large number of later inscriptions the word '*lekhaka*' was used to denote a person who prepared the documents to be incised on stone or metal.[9] In still later times a '*lekhaka*' was one who mainly did the work of copying MSS. Generally, devoted and pious Brāhmaṇas and, in some cases, poor and worn-out Kāyasthas were engaged in this work. Temples and libraries employed such people. Epigraphical records also show that many Jain MSS were copied by monks and nuns who spent their time in preparing the MSS of sacred texts. Similar instances are

[1] iv. 305.
[2] Ibid. i. 77 ; iv. 128.
[3] I. 43.
[4] Bühler, *Indian Studies* III². 8f. 120.
[5] Ibid.
[6] *Buddhist Indian* pp. 109-11.
[7] Stup I, No. 143. (*Ep. Ind.* II, 369-372).
[8] *Indian Palæography*, p. 100.
[9] *Ep. Ind.* I., 1A ; Fleet, *Gupta Ins.* (C11. 3) Nos. 18 & 80.

also found in Nepal where *Bhikhus*, *Vajrachāryas* and nuns copied Buddhist MSS.

2. *Lipikara* or *Libikara*.

Besides the term '*lekhaka*' another term which was used in the sense of a 'writer' in the fourth century B.C. was '*lipikara*', '*libikara*' or '*dipikara*'. It occurs many times in the edicts of *Aśoka*.[1] Sanskrit lexicons regard the term '*lipikara*' as a synonym of '*lekhaka*.'[2] But it seems that in the Aśokan edicts the term is used both in the sense of a 'writer' and an 'engrave '; more in the sense of the later. In the Sanskrit fiction *Vāsavadattā*[3] the word '*lipikara*' means 'writer' in general. Royal writers were sometimes designated as '*rāja-lipikara*', meaning 'a writer of the king'. For instance in one of the Sanchi inscriptions[4] *Subahita Gotiputa* is called '*rājalipi-kara*'. A perusal of Sanskrit literature and epigraphical documents will show that the term '*lipikara*' was less frequently used than the term '*lekhaka*', and it was employed more in the sense of 'a copyist' and 'an engraver' than in the sense of 'a writer'.

3. *Divira*.

Divira is another word employed in the sense of a writer. It first occurs in a Central Indian inscription of A.D. 521-22.[5] In a large number of Valabhi inscriptions of the seventh and the eighth centuries A.D. the 'minister of alliance and war' (*Sāndhivigrahādhikṛita*), who was responsible for the preparation of the draft of documents, is called '*divirapati*' or '*divīrapati*', which means 'the lord of *diviras*.' The term '*divirapati*' clearly indicates that there were a number of *diviras* (writers or clerks) under the charge of the minister of alliance and war, who prepared documents. As regards the origin

[1] पडेन लिखितं लिपिकरेण। Brahmagiri Minor RE. No. 2.
लिपिकरापराधेन (RE. No. 14, Girnar version).
दिपिकर (RE. No. 14 Shahbazgarhi version).

[2] लिपिकरोऽक्षरचणोऽक्षरचुञ्चुश्च लेखके। *Amara*. II. 8. 15.

[3] Hall's ed. p. 239.

[4] Stupa 1, No. 49 (*Ep. Ind.* II. 102).

[5] Fleet: *Gupta Inscriptions.*

of the term *'divira'* Bühler writes : '*Divira*' or *Divīra* is Persian '*Devir*' 'writer', which probably became domesticated in Western India during the time of Sassamians, when the trade and intercourse between Persia and India was greatly developed.[1] In this connection it should be observed that there was no Scythian or Sassasian rule in India in the 7th and the 8th centuries A. D., nor there was any commercial or cultural intercourse between Persia and India due to the Arab occupation of Persia during these centuries. The Scythian rule in Central India became extinct in the last quarter of the 4th century A.D. The use of the word *'debir'* or its adaptations is not evidenced during the first four centuries of the Christian era so far. The origin of the term *'divira'* seems to be in the word *'dipikara'* (a writer or engraver) used in the *Aśokan* edicts.[2] '*Dipikara*' could easily be Prakritised into *divikara*= *diviara*=divira. It is likely that *'dipikara'* and *'devir'* were derived from the same common source, as Sanskrit and ancient Persian were allied languages. The use of the term *'divira'* continued upto the 11th and 12th centuries A.D. The word occurs in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* and other works of this period. For instance, *Kṣemendra's Lokaprakāśa* refers to the various classes of the *'diviras'*, e.g. *ganjadivira* (bazar-writers), *nagaradivira* (town-writers) etc.[3] The currency of the word *'divira'* was mostly confined to N. W. parts of India.

4. *Kāyastha.*

The most prominent term to indicate a fixed class or caste of professional writers was *'Kāyastha'*. It first occurs in the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti*[4] in a not very happy reference: "The king should protect his subjects being oppressed by swindlers, thieves, bad characters, robbers and *Kāyasthas*, specially by the last." *Vijñāneśvara* comments upon the term *'Kāyastha'* in the following words :

1 *Indian Palæography*, p. 101.
2 RE. No. 14 (Shahhazgarhi ed.).
3 *Indian Antiquary*, VI. 10.
4 चाटतस्करदुर्वृत्तमहासाहसकादिभिः ।
पडिच्यमानाः प्रजाः रक्षेत् कायस्थैश्च विशेषतः ॥ I. 336.

"*Kāyasthas*,' mean '*lekhaka*'*s*' (writers) and '*gaṇakas*' (counters or accountants). Subjects should be specially protected from them, because, being favourite of the king and cunning of disposition, they are difficult to be warded off".[1] Obviously, corruption in offices was responsible for this attitude towards the *Kāyasthas*. Next, the word 'Kāyastha' occurs in the Damodarpur Copper-plate Inscription of the time of Budhagupta (c.476-495 A.D.)[2], where the head of the Kāyastha community was one of the members of the District Council of *Koṭivarṣa* (=the Dinajpur district of Bengal). The word is also found in the Kaṇaswa inscription of 738-39 A.D. discovered in Rajasthan.[3] Later the *Kāyasthas* are mentioned very often in the inscriptions found in Gujrat[4] and Kalinga.[5] In the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* of *Kalhaṇa* and the *Lokaprakāśa* of *Kṣhmendra* the *Kāyasthas* are mentioned frequently, which shows that the role of the *Kāyasthas* in Kashmir was very prominent up to the 13th century AD.

The term '*Kāyastha*' is capable of different interpretation. In the present context, a person, who was settled in the *kāya* (body) of the state, was called Kāyastha. Mythologically one fixed in the *kāya*, body of God, representing the recording or cognizing faculty in Him, was the first *Kāyastha* from whom the community emanated. There is a philosophical interpretation. According to it one is called *Kāyastha*, because 'all his ideals and aspirations are centered in his *kāya* (body) and he does not care for anything beyond it.' In the beginning *Kāyastha* was not a caste or *Varṇa*. It was a group or class of people, who chose to enter the ministerial service of the state and came from different *Varṇas* and castes. In course of time such people developed into a community and ultimately

[1] कायस्था लेखका गणकाश्च तैः पीडचमाना विशेषतो रक्षेत् । तेषां राजवल्लभतयातिमायावित्वाच्च दुर्निवारत्वात् । ibid.

[2] प्रथमकायस्थ विप्रपाल । *Ep. Ind.* XV, p. 138.

[3] *Ind. Ant.* XIX. 55.

[4] Ibid. VI, 192.

[5] *Ep. Ind.* III. 224.

into a caste, though their different sources of recruitment survived in the form of a custom according to which the Kāyasthas married in their own sub-caste up to very recently. As regards the social status of the Kāyasthas as a caste, they occupied an influential and effective status among the Hindus, though the orthodox Hindus regarded them as mixed with the Śūdras, evidently on account of some admixture of Śūdra element in them, their evil reputation in offices and their close association with the Muslims later on.

5. *Karaṇa, Karṇikā, Karaṇin, Śāsanin & Dharma-lekhin*

Writers or clerks were known by many designations other than *Kāyastha* in different parts of India. These designations were *Karaṇa, Karṇika, Karanin, Śāśanin* and *Dharmalekhin*. Perhaps associated with an *adhikaraṇa* (office) a clerk was called '*Karaṇa*'. This term seems to be a synonym of *Kāyastha*, as a *Karaṇa* also, like a *Kāyastha*, is not viewed with favour by the law-givers, and it is classed with mixed castes (*Varṇa-saṅkara*). According to the *Manu-Smṛti*[1] *Karaṇa* is one of the progeny born from a *Vrātya Kṣattriya* in a woman of the same *Varṇa*. *Yājñavalkyā*[2] defines '*Karaṇa*' differently: "*Karaṇa* is born from a *Vaiśya* in a *Śūdra* woman." The status of a *Karaṇa* suffered for almost the same reasons as that of a *Kāyastha*. '*Karṇika*' was interpreted by Kielhorn as 'a writer of legal documents (*Karaṇa*[3]). The context in which the term '*Karaṇika*' is used indicates that it was not employed in the sense of a caste but in the sense of an official group of writers. The terms *Karaṇin*[4], *Śāsanin*[5] and *Dharmalekhin*[6] are variously used in the sense of 'a writer in an office', 'one who writes down orders from an officer or a ruler' and 'one who writes legal documents' respectively.

[1] झल्लो मल्लश्च राजन्याद् व्रात्यान्निच्छविरेव च ।
नटश्च करणश्चैव खसो द्रविड एव च ॥ X. 22.

[2] वैश्यात्तु करण: शूद्रयां विन्नास्वेष विधि: स्मृत: । I. 92.

[3] *Ep. Ind.* I. 81, 129, 166; *Ind. Ant.* XVI. 175; XVIII. 12.

[4] *Harṣacharita*, 227 (N. S. ed.).

[5] *Ind. Ant.* XX. 315.

[6] Ibid. XVI. 208.

6. *Śilpin*, *Rūpakāra*, *Sūtradhara and Śilākūṭa.*

The above terms were used for masons and engravers, who carved letters on stone and metals. From a large number of inscriptional evidences it is known that *Praśasti* or *Kāvya* dedicative and commemorative documents were first composed or written by poets or other competent persons. Next, a fair copy of them was prepared by a professional writer. Ultimately the documents were handed over to a mason or an engraver to be incised or engraved on stone or metals as a particular case required.[1] Bühler witnessed a case which fell under his own personal observation, which he describes as follows: "The mason received a sheet with a fair copy of a document (the *Praśasti* of a temple) exactly of the size of a stone on which it was to be incised. He first drew the letters on the stone under the supervision of a Pandit, and then incised them."[2] Sometimes there were some exceptions to this regular procedure. In some cases the authors did the work of the mason also[3] and in a few cases the masons claim that they prepared their own fair copy.[4]

So far as the *Śāsanas* on copper-plates are concerned references to engravers are very rare and they are found in late inscriptions only. Engraved plates were called '*utkirṇa*'[5], '*Unmilita*'[6] and '*Utkaṭṭita*'.[7] Persons who engraved the documents on plates, belonged to the professional castes of blacksmiths, copper-smiths, gold-smith and other artisans. The terms used are '*ayaskara*'[8] or '*lohakara*' (black-smith), *kāṁsyakara* or

[1] *Ep. Ind.* I. 49. author *Devagaṇa*, copyist *Kṣattriya Kumārapāla* and Stone-mason Sampula. *Ep. Ind.* I. 45 author *Ratnasinha*, copyist Kṣattriya *Kumārapāla* and mason, *Sampula*. *Ep. Ind.* I. 81 author *Nehila*, copyist *Taksāditya* and Mason, *Somanātha*.

[2] *Indian Palæography*, p. 101.

[3] In the Talgund *Prasasti* (*Ep. Car.* vii. 176) the poet *Kulya* makes this claim; in the Ajneri ins. (*Ind. Ant.*, XII. 127) Divakarapandita states.

[4] *Ind. Ant.* II. 103, 107, XVII. 140.

[5] ··समामदेशादुत्कीर्णमीश्वरेण । *Ep. Ind.* IV, p. 208.

[6] Fleet, *C. I. I*, vol. III,

[7] चक्रदासेनोत्कट्टितम् । *Ep. Ind.* XV, p. 41.

[8] *Ep. Ind.* iv. 170; *Ind. Ant.* xvii, 227, 230, 236.

tāmrakara (copper-smith), *hemakara*[1] (gold-smith), *silpin*[2] or *vijñānika*[3] (artisan). In Orissa technical terms used for engravers were '*akṣaśālin*' and '*akṣaśālika*'[4] (Prakritised forms, *akhasalin* and *akhasale*), all meaning 'a person who belongs to a record-house.'

7. *Officers in charge of the Preparation of Documents.*

Epigraphical records are not very exact and clear on this point. They very often confuse between the officers in charge of the preparation of documents and the persons who actually prepared the documents. Officers mentioned in this connecion are *amātya* (a minister or high official), *sāndhivigrahika* (minister in charge of alliances and war), *senāpati* (minister in charge of army), *balādhikṛta* (commander of army), *mahākṣapaṭalādhikāraṇādhikṛta-mahāsāmanṭa mahāraja* (a vassal of the sovereign who was also in charge of the office of the Royal Records) etc. One illustration will explain the situation. The Valabhi Copper-plate Inscription of Dharasena (Valabhi E. 269=588 A.D.) is concluded as

> "My own signature of *Mahārājādhirāja Śridharasena. Dūtaka Sāmanta Śīlāditya.* Written by *Sandhivigrahādhikaraṇādhikṛta-dīvirapati Skandabhaṭa*".[5]

From the above extract it is evident that at the end of the document the signature of the king was affixed, a *Dūtaka* (representative) of the king was present when the royal document was executed and the document was (caused to be) written by an officer, who was in charge of the 'Office of Alliance and War' and who was also the supreme head of the *diviras* (clerks). In the present case, really speaking, the document was prepared by a *divira* (clerk), though in the inscription it is asserted that this was done by the officer

[1] *Ep. Ind.* III. 317; *Ind. Ant.* XVIII. 17.

[2] *Ind. Ant.* XVII. 234.

[3] *Ind. Ant.* XVI, 208.

[4] *Ind. Ant.* XIII, 123; XVIII, 145; *Ep. Ind.* III. 19, 213.

[5] स्वहस्तो मम महाराजाधिराजश्रीधरसेनस्य । दूतकः सामन्तशीलादित्यः । लिखितं सन्धिविग्रहाधिकरणाधिकृत दिविरपतिस्कन्दभटेन । *Ind. Ant.* Vol. VI, p. 9.

himself. According to the *Rājataraṅgiṇi*[1] the kings of Kashmir used to maintain an officer designated as '*paṭṭopādhyāya*', "the teacher (charged with the preparation) of title-deeds'. This special officer belonged to the *akṣapaṭala* office. Stein regarded *akṣapatala* as the Accoutant-General's office. Bühler, however, took it to be the Record Office or Court of Rolls.[2]

8. *Manuals for Clerks and Writers.*

The ancient Hindus not only evolved the art of writing by inventing and reforming alphabets but they also developed a system of correspondence and drafting which helped and stimulated the art of writing. Books were written to give technical assistance to clerks and writers. One of such manuals, the *Lekhapanchāśikā* lays down rules for drafting various kinds of private letters, official documents of different varieties e.g., orders, proclamations, land-grants etc. and political and diplomatic documents like the treaties between kings. A section of Kṣemendra-Vyāsadāsa's *Lokaprakāśa* gives detailed rules regarding the drafting of commercial and economic documents, for instance, bonds, bills of exchange (hundi) etc.[3] There is also another 'letter writer' (*Patra-mañjari*) attributed to *Vararuchi*, one of the nine jewels of *Vikramāditya*. Because this work refers to letter-writing on paper, Burnel was of the opinion that it should be assigned to a period after the Muslim invasion of India[4]. This opinion is untenable in view of the fact that the use of paper in India is referred to by Greek writers in the fourth century B.C.[5]

9. *Place of Writers and Engravers in the Evolution of Alphabets.*

There were three sets of people, who influenced the course of alphabets. Firstly there were the Brahmanical teachers, literateurs and priests, who invented alphabets and modified

[1] V. 397f. (Stein ed.).
[2] *Indian Palæography*, p. 101.
[3] Cf. Bhandarkar, *Report on the Search for Sanskrit* MSS., 1882-83, 33; Rajendralal Mitra, *Gough's Papers*, 16, 133.
[4] *South Indian Palæography*, p. 89.
[5] Stratbo. XV, 717.

them for literary and religious purposes on the basis of pictographs, representations and symbols created by still earlier men. They further introduced changes under the impact of grammar and phonetics. This process was later on facilitated by the Buddhist and Jain monks and nuns, who assiduously devoted themselves to the task of writing and copying sacred texts. The second set of people, who affected the evolution of alphabets, consisted of the individual professional writers and the castes of writers, which originated in India. Their genius was not creative, but they had the power of adaptation and modification of forms to suit their convenience regarding writing materials and speed in actual writing. They were also not indifferent to the elegance of letters. This must have necessitated changes in the shape of letters. This third set of people responsible for variations in the forms of letters included the stone-masons and the engravers on metals, This set being semi-educated was less effective than the first two. But the very nature of materials (stone and metals) on which they had to work gave new orientations to the various limbs of letters. The evolution of the monumental forms and alphabets was mostly due to the needs of this class of people in carving, incising, drilling and engraving.

CHAPTER VII

TECHNIQUE OF WRITING.

1. *Orientation of Individual Signs and Letters.*

Beginning from the Indus Valley script[1] up to the *Brāhmī* and the *Kharoṣṭhi* scripts of the fifth and the fourth centuries B.C. and subsequent periods[2] one can very easily see that the signs and letters are formed almost in a uniform manner. They are traced vertically from top to bottom as if from an imaginary line. The groups of signs are arranged horizontally except in the case of some Kuṣaṇa[3] and Gupta[4] coins where they are arranged vertically due to the paucity of space. In the Indus Valley inscriptions, where animal designs accompany them, the animal is usually placed immediately below the inscription and, in the majority of cases, faces to the right. In some cases, however, the animal faces to the left.[5]

2. *Direction of Writing.*

The direction of writing in the Indus Valley inscriptions is still a matter of speculation. On quite insufficient data some scholars have held the view that the inscriptions read from the right to the left. Smith and Gadd are of the same opinion: "The number referred to is no. CCCLXIV of our list and it is true that in the impression of this seal the bird enclosed in a ring (it seems to be somewhat carefully marked as a drake) faces to the right. It is, of course, a well-known rule of the Egyptian hieroglyphs that the inscription is read from the side towards which the figures face. But it is easy to show that this is no safe indication for the 'Indus' writing; for while most of

[1] Sign-list of Early Indus Script, *Mohenjodaro And The Indus Valley Civilization*, Vol. II, pp. 434-452.

[2] Bühler: *Indische Palæographie*,, Tables I-VI.

[3] Whitehead: *The Catalogue of the Coins of the Punjab Museum*, Lahore.

[4] Allan: *The Catalogue of the Coins of the Gupta Dynasty.*

[5] G. R. Hunter: *The Script of Harappa and Mohenjodaro etc.* Plates I and IA.

the 'men' signs face to the right (Cf. Nos. CCCLXXIV-CCCLXXX in the list) there are several birds and animals (cf. Nos. CCCLIV-CCCLVIII) which face to the left. Some other criterian therefore must be sought, but it is not altogether easy to find. First it will be noticed that in nearly all cases the bull or other animal which forms the main subject of the seal faces to the right, and there is consequently a presumption that the inscription begins from the head. There is, nevertheless, at least one exception to this instance of the animal, for in the impression of the seal No. 341 a rhinoceros faces to the left. This may be an inadvertence, but it suffices to warn us against relying too much on the usual position of the animal as indicating the beginning of the inscription. Another small indication may be found in the usual manner of writing the sign composed of seven strokes ( ) in which the lower three are nearly always placed level with the right end of the upper four.[1] A very significant example, too, is a seal from Harappa (No. 5929) which makes it evident that the engraver has been cramped for space, and that in consequence not only were his signs closely bunched together, but the space remaining on the left side was not sufficient to take another sign, which has therefore been dropped below the line. The inference that the inscription began from the right is almost irresistable. But there is a final instance which puts this conclusion beyond doubt. The seal H. 173 found in the excavations of 1926-27, is peculiar in having no animal device, but a long inscription which occupies two whole sides of the square and most of the third side. Now (in the impression of course), this inscription occupies all the top side, all the left side and most of the bottom, thus , the signs being turned 90 degrees at each corner in such a way that their tops always follow the edges. It is manifest, therefore, that the inscription was read turning the sealing round in the

[1] This indication may suggest just the opposite. In the modern Indian numerical system, in which figures are written from left to right, for addition and multiplication both, figures are arranged exactly as in this sign. In Arabic based upon Indian system the same system is followed.

hand, and the position of the second and the third sections shows that it was turned over towards the right; in other words, the reader began from the right of the first and the longest section, turned the sealing through 90 degrees, read the second section again from right to left, and similarly the third. Proof that these inscriptions are to be read from right to left seems herewith complete."[1] G. R. Hunter holds almost the same view.[2]

It should be observed here that instances referred to above are not conclusive. First of all, we are not yet sure whether a particular piece bearing inscriptions is a seal or an amulet. In an inscription on a seal the direction of letters is reversed,[3] but in an inscription on an amulet letters run in their usual direction. In the latter case, it is the original which will indicate the direction of writing and not its impression, which has been used by the authorities quoted above. As regards the grouping of the strokes (in the second line of the sign) towards the right, it has already been pointed out that it may equally suggest tke rightwards direction of writing. The third and the fourth instances have some force, provided we can finally decide whether the pieces in question are seals or amulets. Thus in the present state of our knowledge it is not safe to make an exclusive assertion. If we are able to establish a close relation and sequence between the Indus Valle script and the *Brāhmī* script, the possibility of the rightward direction of the former is increased.

The *Brāhmī* script, the best known in ancient India, reads from the left to the right. This fact is evidenced by the earliest specimens to the latest of this script (from the Piprahwa Buddhist Vase Inscription[4] to the Gahaḍavāla and the Chedi inscriptions[5]). Bühler was of the opinion that, due

[1] Marshall: *Mohenjodaro And The Indus Civilization*, Vol. II, p. 410-11.

[2] *The Script of Harappa and Mohenjodaro etc.* pp. 19, 20; 37-43.

[3] In the copper-plates of India, which belong to a much later times, the seals were bodily attached to the documents and they bear inscriptions in the usual direction from the left to the right.

[4] *Indian Antiquary*, XXXVI, 117ff.; Lüder's *List* No. 931.

[5] *Sarnath Ins. of Kumaradevi*, Ep. Ind., IX, pp. 324 ff.

to its Semitic origin, the *Brāhmī* script was written from the right to the left in the beginning and later on it changed its direction.[1] According to him a specimen of early *Brāhmī* was found in the inscriptions on the Eran coin with the legend running from the right to the left.[2] Unfortunately no other specimen of this kind has been discovered on stone or on other writing materials, and the Eran coin represents, most probably, the inadvertence of the maker of the mould, who instead of putting reversed letters on it put the letters in their proper form which resulted in a reversed direction of writing on the Eran coin. Another specimen may be suggested in the signature of the engraver Paḍa at the end of the Siddhapur version of the Minor Rock-Edict of Aśoka.[3] But the main body of the inscription is written from the left to the right. This fact clearly indicates that the style of the signature of Paḍa was not usual and coming from the N. W. of India, where the *Kharoṣṭhi* was written from the right to the left, he was just adapting the *Brāhmī* script to the *Kharoṣṭhi* style for his signature.

That the *Brāhmī* script might have been, once, written in the boustrophedon[4] style, that is, the lines alternatively written from left to right and from right to left, is suggested by the Yerragudi version of the Minor Rock-Edict of Aśoka.[5] In this edict the engraver continues in the second line from right to left. Thus he alternates the direction of lines up to l. no. 16, the rest of the lines except nos. 20 and 26 are written from left to right. Now the question is : Does this isolated and incomplete specimen in the southern corner of India prove that the *Brāhmī* script was in earlier centuries written in a boustrophedon style or does it only suggest

[1] *Indian Palæography*, p. 8.

[2] Cunninhgam : *Coins of Ancient India*, 101.

[3] Hultzsch, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*. Vol. I.

[4] It is a Greek word derived from *bous* = ox + *strophos* = turning + *don* (adv. suf.). Just as an ox turns in ploughing, so does this style of writing.

[5] *Ind. Hist. Quart.* VII, p. 817ff; IX, p. 116f. ; XIII, pp. 132 ff.

that an engraver from N. W. India, like Paḍa, was unsuccessfully forcing the *Kharoṣṭhi* style of writing in the alternate lines for the *Brāhmī* script which he was employed to engrave. The latter possibility appears to be greater than the former, specially in view of the fact that no specimen of boustrophedon writing is found among the inscriptions of the fifth and the fourth centuries B. C.

The direction of the *Kharosthi* script is from right to left. There are, however, some *Kharoṣṭhī* inscription of later periods in which the direction of writing is from left to right. The change of direction has been ascribed to the influence of the *Brāhmī* on the *Khāroṣṭhī*. But there is a suspicion, in view of the Indian and Chinese tradition, regarding the indigenous origin of the *Kharoṣṭhī*, that originally it was written from left to right, then, under foreign influence, it changed its direction and in its last phase it tries to reassert its original position. On account of its long exotic use, however, the *Kharoṣṭhī* ceased to appeal to the Indians and ultimately dwindled and disappeared.

3. *Line.*

Though in the early stage of writing in India letters had no head-lines, the Indians had developed a sense of straight writing and to ensure it they conformed to an imaginary, temporary or dim line. In doing so all the letters were written in a horizontal straight line, and the medial signs (*Matṛkās*) of equal height were placed above the line. Even the undeciphered Indus Valley signs are, more or less, arranged in a straight horizontal line.[1] We find a marked attempt at the formation of a straight line in the *Brāhmī* inscriptions of the Mauryan period. It should be observed, however, that the engravers of *Aśoka* were not a complete success in this respect. Both in the rock and in the pillar inscriptions many letters are undulating. The irregularities are generally noticeable in the

[1] G. R. Hunter: *The Script of Harappa and Mohenjodaro* etc., plates I-XXXVII.

[2] Hultzsch: *Corpus Ins. Ind.*, Vol. I.

rock edicts of Girnar, Dhauli and Jaugada[2] perhaps due to the nature of the surface of the rocks used for engraving. Some of the contemporary inscriptions strictly follow the principle of lining. For instance, in the Ghasundi Stone Inscription[1] all the letters are arranged in a straight line and only the medial signs and the superscribed *ra* run above the line in a regular formation. In subsequent periods the principle of forming lines is regularly adhered to. The devices used for following the principle were, as already said, the making of temporary or dim lines with chalk or char-coal or by simple marking faintly with a pointed instrument.

The writers of MSS were more particular, than masons, in forming straight lines. This fact is evident from the oldest specimens of MSS. In the *Dhamma-pada* MS from Khotan lines were made with the help of a ruler. The palm-leaf MSS also followed the same principle. To make the writing more artistic the ends of horizontal lines on MSS (both palm-leaf and paper of later times) were marked by double vertical lines running across the whole breadth of the leaves.

In the stone inscriptions as well as the MSS the lines were always formed horizontally and they were arranged from the top to the bottom, running almost parallel to each other. There are, however, a few exceptions to the latter arrangement. For example, in a *Khāroṣṭhī* inscription from Swat the arrangement is from the bottom to the top and one has to read it from below. We can mention a few exceptions to the former arrangement also. On the coins of the Kuṣaṇas and the Guptas vertical lines are formed due to, as already indicated, the paucity of space.[2] No specimen of vertical lines are found in inscriptions and MSS.

4. *Grouping of Letters and Words.*

In ancient India writers did not pay much attention to the grouping of the letter of one word and the grouping of

[1] Bühler: *Indian Palæography*, Plate II, Col. XVI.
[2] *J.R.A.S.* 1889, Pl. I; *Num. Chron.* 1893, pls. VIII-X.

the words of one phrase, clause and sentence. In early times they did not use regularly even signs to demarcate the one sentence from the other. They used to write letters continuously without a stop up to the end of a line, of a verse, or other divisions. This indifference towards grouping was due to grammatical precision which the Indian languages attained; grammatical formation of words left little scope for confusion even if letters and words were written closely or without demarcation. We come across, however, some attempts at forming the groups of words. The basis of this grouping was either the sense-demarcation in a sentence or the method of reading adopted by the scribe. The pillar edicts of Aśoka (except Kauśāmbī) and the Kalsi version of his R. E. (Nos. I-XI) indicate clearly that the conscious attempt was made at the grouping of words.[1] Similar instances can be found in some of the prose inscriptions of the Andhras and the Western Kṣatrapas at Nasik.[2] Later on in metrical inscriptions, where stops became essential for recitation, the *padas* (half-verses) are often separated by blank spaces.[3] There is another device for grouping also. One line contains either a full verse or only a half verse.[4] In the inscriptions a *Maṅgala* (an auspicious formula) forms a group by itself and stands separately in the beginning on the margin.[5]

In MSS. which are later in date than the inscriptions, the same arrangement of grouping is found as in the case of metrical inscriptions. In the *Kharoṣṭhī Dhammapada* Ms. from Khotan each line contains one *Gāthā* and the *padas* (half-verses) are separated by blanks. A better instance of grouping is found in the Bower Ms. in which single words and the groups of words are often written separately, though it is evident that no fixed principles are followed in grouping.

[1] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. II, p. 524.
[2] Compare Nos. 5, 11, A, B and 13.
[3] Fleet: *Gupta Ins.* (C11. Vol. III) No. 50, pl. XXXI B.
[4] Ibid. Nos. 1, 2, 6 pl. IVA and 10, pl. V.
[5] Ibid. Nos. 6 pl. IVA and 15 pl. IXA.

5. *Punctuation and Interpunctuation.*

Ancient Indian writers did not realise the absolute necessity of punctuation or interpunctuation up to very late times and, even when the need of punctuation dawned upon their mind, they remained indifferent to its proper use. It is impossible to trace the use of punctuation in the Indus Valley script, firstly because it is not deciphered as yet and secondly all the inscriptions in this script are fragmentary and hardly involving any necessity of a punctuation. There are a few signs which occur very frequently at the end of inscriptions, but they do not seem like stops; they look more like suffixes. When we reach the age of deciphered inscriptions from the fifth century B. C. up to the beginning of the Christian era we find some attempt at punctuation. Only one sign—a stroke, either straight or curved [ı *or*)] – was used for denoting different types of pauses. From the first century A. D. up to the fifth century A. D. a number of complex signs for punctuation developed, but they were not regularly used. From the fifth century A. D. onwards, in the metrical inscriptions, specially in the *Praśastis* engraved on stone, the system of interpunctuation became more regular. The first document showing the regular use of punctuation is the Mandasor *Praśasti*, dated 473-74 A.D.[1], in which a single vertical stroke after a half-verse and two such strokes at the end of a verse is found. It should be noticed, however, that the copper-plates and the stone inscriptions, specially from the South,[2] do not conform to this rule. From an observation of different types of inscriptions it can be inferred that the development of the system of punctuation was due to the conscious attempt on the part of Brahmanical schoolmen and literary writers; clerks in the state offices and professional writers were very careless about punctuations. Much also depended upon individual education and efficiency of writers. This is evident from the fact that in the same age

[1] Fleet: *Gupta Ins.* (C11, Vol. III) No. 18, pl. XI.

[2] *Ind. Ant.* Vol. VI, 88; VII, 163; X, 63-64.

of the documents and also in the same type of them—the use of punctuations differed in frequency and correctness.

(1) The use of Punctuation in the *Brāhmī* Inscriptions.

In the documents written in the *Brāhmī* script different kinds of punctuation marks were used for various types of stops. They are classified as follows:

(i) *A single vertical line or daṇḍa* (।). It is used for the following purposes:

(*a*) separation of single words,[1]
(*b*) separation of groups[2]
(*c*) separation of prose from verse,[3]
(*d*) marking the end of the portions of sentences,[4]
(*e*) marking the end of sentences,[5]
(*f*) marking the end of half-verses,[6]
(*g*) marking the end of verses,[7] and
(*h*) marking the end of documents.[8]

(ii) *A vertical line with a small horizontal top-bar* (T). It is not very common. In northern India no specimen has so far been discovered. It is found in a few inscriptions of the Eastern Chālukyas.[9]

(iii) *Two vertical lines or daṇḍas* (॥). It occurs

(*a*) after numerals,[10]
(*b*) after the names of donors,[11]
(*c*) at the end of sentences,[12]
(*d*) at the end of half-verses,[13]

1 Aśokan RE. (Kalsi, XII, XIII ; Sahasram).
2 Ibid.
3 Fleet: *Gupta Ins.* (CIJ. 3), No. 21, line 16.
4 Ibid. No. 80, pl. 44.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid. No. 42, pl. 28.
7 Ibid. No. 38, pl. 24, line 35.
8 Ibid. No. 19, pl. 12A.
9 *Indian Antiquary.* XII. 92; XIII. 213.
10 *The Junnar Ins.* Nos. 24-29.
11 Ibid.
12 *Amaravati Ins.* No. 28; Ind. Ant. VI, 23, 1. 9.
13 Fleet: *Gupta Ins.(C.I.I., III)* No. 17 pl. 10.

(*e*) at the end of verses,[1]
(*f*) at the end of big prose sections[2], and
(*g*) at the end of documents.[3]

(iv) *Two vertical lines with a hook added to the top of the first one* (ᒣ|). It appears to be a later development, as its specimens are found only after the fifth century A.D.[4]

(v) *Two vertical lines with hooks added one each to their tops* (ᒣᒥ).[5]

(vi) *Two vertical lines with curves and hooks added to the foot of one or of the both* (ᒍᒐ).[6]

(vii) *Two vertical lines with a bar attached on the left to the middle of the first line* (⊣|).[7] This feature appears from the end of the eighth century A.D.

(viii) *Two vertical lines with bar added to the top of the both* (TT). Inscriptions of the Eastern *Chālukyas* conrtain such specimens.[8]

(ix) *Two vertical lines with a hook added to the top of the left and with a bar attached to the top of the right* (ᒣT). An instance of this type of punctuation is found in one of the Kalinga inscriptions.[9]

(x) *Three vertical lines* (|||). They occasionally mark the end of documents.[10]

(xi) *A single short horizontal stroke, placed on the left below the first sign of the last line* (_. . . . .) *marks the end of documents.*[11]

1 Ibid. No. 17 pl. 10; No. 18 pl. 11.
2 Ibid. No. 26, pl. 16, 1.24; No. 33, pl. 21B, 1. 9.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid. No. 17, pl. 10, 1. 32, 38; No. 35 pl. 22, last line.
5 *Nepal Ins.* No. 4, *Ind. Ant.* IX, 168, last line.
6 *Indian Antiquary*, IX, 100, last line.
7 Ibid. XII. 202, 1. 1ff.; XIII, 68.
8 *Indian Antiquary*, XII, 92; XIII. 213.
9 *Ep. Ind.* III, 128, last line.
10 *Indian Antiquary*, VII, 79.
11 Asokan RE. (Dhauli and Jaugada versions).

(xii) *A curved or hooked short horizontal stroke* (⌒ or ⊃ or ⊂). From the seeond century B.C, to the seventh century A.D. this sign serves the same purpose as the single vertical line.[1]

(xiii) *Two horizontal strokes often bent* (⌒). They are used in the place of two vertical lines from the first century A.D. to the the eighth century A.D.[2]

(xiv) *Two vertical dots* (:). In the *Kuṣaṇa* and some subsequent inscriptions this sign is used in the place of two horizontal lines.[3]

(xv) *Two vertical lines followed by a short horizontal line* (||-). Some time this sign marks the end of documents.[4]

(xvi) *A semi-circular stroke facing left* (⊃) It also appears at the end of inscriptions.[5]

(xvii) *A semi-circular stroke facing left with a bar in the middle* (϶). In the *Kuṣaṇa* inscriptions it stands after the auspicious formula *siddhaṁ*.[6]

(xviii) *Numeral figures and auspicious symbols.* Besides the signs of punctuation mentioned above, numeral figures and auspicious symbols were also used for the purposes of punctuation. The former were employed to mark the end of verses[7] and the latter to mark the end of inscriptions[8] and the sections of the text in the MSS.[9]

[1] *Nanaghat Ins.*, Bühler; *Arch. Sur. Report West. India*, V., pl. 51, line 6 after vano; *Nasik Ins.* No. 11A, B; Fleet: *Gupta Ins.* (*C..II.* Vol. III), No. 1 (end; No. 3, pl. 2B.

[2] *Ep. Ind.* I, 389, No. 14; Fleet: *Gupta Ins.* (*C.I.I.* Vol. III), No. 3, pl. 2B, No. 40 pl. 26, No. 41, pl. 27. No. 55, pl. 34.

[3] *Ep. Ind.* I, 395, Nos. 28, 29 (after *dānaṁ*); Fleet: *Gupta Ins.* (*C.I.I.* Vol. III).

[4] *Ind. Ant.* VI. 76; *Ep. Ind.* III. 260.

[5] Asokan Edicts (Kalsi RE. No. I-IX).

[6] *Ep. Ind.* II, 212, No. 42, and foot-note.

[7] Fleet: *Gupta Ins.* (*C.I.I.*, Vol. III), Nos. 1, 2.

[8] *Asokan Edicts* (Jaugad RE.).

[9] Cf. *Bower MS.*

6. *Pagination.*

Numbering of pages was necessary to ensure the sequence of the contents of documents. There was hardly any need of it in stone inscriptions and other single-page documents. The ancient Hindus, however, practised pagination in their MSS. and copper-plates, which very often numbered more than one. It should be noted that the Indian system was to number only the leaves (*pattra*) and not the pages (*pṛṣṭha*) of MSS. In the major part of India the second page of the leaf called *sāṅka-pṛṣṭha* was numbered,[1] while in the south the figure of pagination stood on the first page of the leaf. The same system was followed in the case of copper-plates also, though they were not regularly numbered.

7. *Corrections.*

Various devices were used for correcting errors in the inscriptions on stones and metals and also in the MSS. Some of them were as follows:

(i) *The scoring out of the erroneous words and passages.* Examples of this device are found in the Aśokan inscriptions.[3]

(ii) *The placing of short strokes above or below the line containing errors.* This sign was used later and is found both in inscriptions and MSS.

(iii) *The covering of delenda with turmeric or yellow paste.* This was applied in the case of MSS. only.

(iv) *The beating out of erroneous words and passages and then engraving of corrections on the smoothed spot.* This was mostly done on copper-plate. Some times the entire writing space was beaten smooth and prepared for fresh documents. A few specimens of complete palimpsests are available.[4]

[1] There are a few exceptions also. See Wiener Zeitschrift fur die Kunde des Morgenlandes (the *Viena Oriental Journal*).

[2] Burnell: *South Indian Palæography*, pl. XXIV.

[3] Kalsi R.E. No. XII. 1. 31.

[4] *Ind. Ant.* VII, 351, No. 47; XIII. 84; *Ep. Ind.* III. 41, note 6.

8. *Omissions.*

The available cases of omissions are less in number than those of corrections and the process of completing the sentences or passages was simpler.

(i) *The adding of omitted words or phrases above or below the line without any sign indicating the place to which they belong.* Examples of this type are found in the Aśokan inscriptions.[1] This represents the stage of indefiniteness and indifference.

(ii) *The inserting of the omitted words in the interstices between the letters.*

(iii) *The adding of omitted words in the margin or between the lines with a small upright or inclined cross, called kākapada or haṁsapada, indicating the spot of omission.*[2] This is a later phase found in the inscriptions and MSS.

(iv) *The use of a Svastika* (卐) *instead of a cross for denoting the place of omission.*[3]

(v) *The use of a cross* for indicating intentional omission. This device is found in the South Indian MSS. containing *Sūtras* with commentaries.[4]

(vi) *The use of dots on the line* or short strokes above the line for marking intentional omissions or comissions caused by defects in the original of the copy.[5] It is generally found in Kashmir MSS.

(vii) *The use of the mark Avagraha* (ऽ) to mark the elision of *a* (अ) after *e* (ए) and *o* (ओ). It first appears in the Baroda Copper-plate of the Rāṣṭrakūta king Dhruva, dated A.D. 834-35.[6]

(viii) *The use of a Svastika* (卐) or a *Kuṇḍala* (O) to mark unintelligible passages. These signs were mostly employed in MSS.[7]

[1] Kalsi R.E. XIII, 2, 1. II; *Ep. Ind.* III., 314, 1. 5.

[2] *Ep. Ind.* III. 52, pl. 2, line 1; *Ep. Ind.* III, 276, line 11.

[3] *Ind. Ant.* VI., 32, pl. 3.

[4] *Āpastamba-Dharmasūtra*, p. 11 (10).

[5] *Ind. Ant.* VI. 19, note, line 33; 20, note, line 11.

[6] *Ind. Ant.* XIV, 193; *Ep. Ind.* III, 329; IV. 244, note 7.

[7] *Kashmir Report*, 71; Keilhorn, *Mahabhāṣya*, 2, 10 note.

9. *Abbreviations*

Tendency for abbreviation is natural when the same words or phrases occur either in the same document or similar documents for the sake of economy in space and for increase in speed. This tendency is visible sufficiently early in Indian palæography. The inscriptions of the Āndhra kings[1] and the Kuṣaṇa period[2] furnish a large number of specimens of abbreviations. Later inscriptions and MSS. also contain abbreviations. They may be grouped as follows :

Words		Abbreviations.
Saṁvatsara (year)		... *Saṁva*, *Sava*, *Saṁ* or *Sa.*
Grīṣma or *Gimhaṇa* (summer)		... *Gṛ*, *Gai*, or *Gi.*
Hemanta		... *He*
Divasa		... *Di*
Śuddha or *Śukla-pakṣa-dina*	(date of the bright half of the month)	... *Su*, *Su di* or *Su ti.*
Bahula or *Bahula pakṣa-dina*	(date of the dark half of the month)	... *Ba*, *Va di* or *ba ti.*[3]
Dvitīya (second)		... *Dvi*[4]
Dūtaka (Messenger or Representative)		... *Dū*[5]
Gāthā		... *Ga*[6]
Ślaka		... *Śla*[7]
Pāda		... *Pa*[8]
Thakkura		... *Tha* (ठ०)[9]

10. *Auspicious Symbols (Maṅgalas) and Ornamentation.*

Auspicious symbols were associated with documents for adding sanctity to, and for insuring the successful completion

[1] *Nasik Ins.* of Shri Pulumāyi, No. 15 ; *Kanheri Ins.* of Sirisena or Sakasena Mādhariputa, No. 14.

[2] *Sarnath Buddhist Image Inscripiion* of *Kaniska*, *Ep. Ind.* VIII, 173ff ; *Ara Stone Inscription* of *Kaniska* II, *Ep. Ind.* XIV, 143.

[3] The forms *su ti* and *ba ti* in place of *su di* and *ba di* are found in Kashmir.

[4] and [5] Inscriptions of *Surāstra* and *Mahārāstra*, *Ind. Ant.* VII. 73, pl. 2. line 20 ; XIII. 84, lines 37, 40.

[6] *The Khotan Dhammapada MSS.*

[7] and [8] *The Bower MSS.*, pl. II.

[9] *The MS of the Mālavikāgnimitra,* p. V, ed. by S. P. Pandit.

of the deeds contained in them. It was done in consonance with an ancient Indian literary custom which required that at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of every composition, there should be a benedictory or auspicious word, e. g., *Siddhaṁ*, *Oṁ*, *Śrī*, *Svasti* etc.[1] In epigraphical records, however we find mostly symbols in place of words. In ancient Indian palæography the specimens of auspicious symbols are available from the time of Aśokan edicts.[2] In different periods, different types of symbols had predominance and currency. The most important of them are mentioned below :[3]

(i) *Svastika* (the widely current auspicious symbol)

(ii) *Triratna* (an ornamented trident, representing the Three Jewels of Buddhism and Jainism and the trinity of Brahmanism)

(iii) *Triratna* resting on *Dharmachakra* (a trident resting on the Wheel of Religion)

(iiia) *Badha-maṅgala* (a crown-like thing)[3a]

(iv) *Chaītya* (representation of a shrine)

(v) *Bodhi-Vrikṣa* (Bo-tree)[4]

(vi) *A large circle with a smaller concentric circle or with one or several dots within it.* This sign may be either a conventional representation of *Dharma-Chākra* or of a lotus.[5] The use of this sign is found in the text at the end of larger sections and at the end of documents or literary works.

[1] ग्रन्थपरिसमाप्तेः निर्विघ्नतार्थं शिष्टाचारपरिपालनार्थं ग्रन्थादौ ग्रन्थमध्ये ग्रन्थान्ते च मङ्गलम् ।

[2] See the facsimiles, Jaugada R.E., *Ind. Ant.*, VI, 88 ; VII, 163.

[3] The facsimiles of the Sohgaura plate, *Ep. Ind.* XXII, p. 2 ; Bhaja Ins. Nos. 2, 3, 7 ; Karle Ins. Nos. 1-3, 5, 20 ; Nasik Ins. Nos. 1, 4A, B, 14, 21, 24 ; *Ep. Ind.* II, 368 ; Bhagavan Lal, *Sixth Oriental Congress Proc.* III, 2, 136ff.

[3a] *Hāthigumpha Cave Inscription of Khāravela*, *Ep. Ind.* XX, p. 72ff.

[4] These symbols were national in their character and they were used irrespective of sectarian affiliation.

[5] This symbol is clearly visible in the front of Fleet : *Gupta Inscriptions*, (*C.I.I.*, Vol. III, No. 63, pl. 39A).

(vii) *The conventional or ornamental forms of letter O of the syllable Oṁ.* In later inscriptions they appear very frequently. They are put both at the beginning and at the end of inscriptions and sometimes on the margin of copper plates.[1]

(viii) *Sculptural pieces attached to inscriptions.* Among these the ornamental motifs mainly used are *Śaṅkha* (conch-shell), *Padma* (lotus), *Nandi* (the sacred bull of *Śiva* *Matsya* (fish), *Suryachakra* (sun-wheel), *Tārā* (star) etc.[2] Conch-shell and lotus are symbols of prosperity, *Nandi* of protection, fish of fertility and sun-wheel and star of longevity.

(ix) *The royal coat of arms.* The use of this sign is rather rare. It is found on the copper-plates, perhaps, in place of a royal seal which was generally provided separately. Some-times such devices are found on stone inscriptions also.[3]

(x) The Buddhist MSS of Nepal, the Jain MSS of Gujrat and the Brahmanical Mss of Rajasthan, Kashmir, Kangra are highly ornamental and profusely illustrated They contain religious symbols and floral and mural decorative designs.

11. *Seals (Aṅka)*

Though the use of seals on royal and offiicial orders, political documents and diplomatic correspondence may have been common in ancient times, they do not seem to have been regarded a legal requisite to grants in the early days of Indian inscriptions. The earliest law-books do not insist on the use of seals on any charter of grants. As a matter of fact the practice of using seals is of a later origin. The first legal authority, which require the use of a seal on a grant-charter is

[1] Fleet: *Gupta Ins.* (*C.I.I.*, Vol. III, No. 11, pl. 6A; No. 20, pl. 12B, No. 26, pl. 16; *Ind. Ant.* VI, 32; *Ep. Ind.* III, 52; *the Bower MS.*, pl. I, pl. I; *Al-Berunis' India* (Sachau), I, 173.

[2] Bhagwan Lal's *Nepal Ins.*, *Indian Art.* IX, 163 ff.

[3] *Ep. Ind.* III, 307; III, 14; *Ind. Ant.*, VI, 49 ff., 162.

the *Yājñavalkya-smṛti*[1] (1st or 2nd century A.D.), though the first positive evidence of this type belongs to the fourth century A.D. From the early mediaeval period the use of seals for royal authentication to grants became fairly common. This, however, was true in the case of copper-plates only; stone records had no marks of royal authentication. The absence of authentication marks on stone-charters was, perhaps, due to the fact that the stone-charters had their duplicates on copper-plates to which official seals were attached.

The attachment of seals to the charters followed certain methods and, besides royal authentication, had a certain purpose in view. The majority of grants were incised on more than one coper-plates. In order to keep the plates of a grand together a ring of the same metal was prepared. A hole was made through the proper right side of the plates and then the ring was passed through holes. Ultimately the seal was attached to the ring. The two ends of the ring were riveted or welded together through some process and the seal was cast over the joint. This process of attaching the seal to the charters provided a safeguard against any attempt at forging, additions or substitutes to the original grants, as the original plates could not be separated without breaking the seal, the manufacture of which was an official monoply.

The royal seals are of various types. The majority of them contain the royal coat of arms, generally the effigies of animals and birds—sacred or symbolic—and of deities worshipped in the royal dynasty concerned. Some of the seals, in addition to such emblems, have a long or a short inscription containing the name of the king or the founder of the dynasty or the whole genealogy of the dynasty. A few of the seals have merely an inscription of some significance. Some important specimens of seals are classified as follows:

(1) *The seal of the Guptas.* It bore an effigy of the *Garuḍa* bird, the conveyance of *Viṣṇu,* and was called '*Garuḍamadaṅka*'. This seal is mentioned in the

[1] I. 318.

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Allahabad Stone Pillar Inscription of *Samudragupta*.[1] The spurious Nalanda Copper-plate inscriptions of *Samudragupta*, dated years 5 and 9, contain this seal which must have been forged on the basis of the original model.[2] The Bhitari Seal of *Kumāragupta* II (III?) also possesses an effigy of *Garuḍa*, and a legend below it, containing the genealogy of the family.[3] A number of Gupta seals of this type were discovered at Nalanda.[4]

(2) *The seal of the Puṣyabhūtis*. No separate seal was attached to the copper-plates, but the autograph of the king was incised at the end of the document. The autograph of *Harṣa* reads, '*Svahasto mama Mhhārājādhirāja-Śri Harṣasya*'.[5]

(3) *The seal of the Chedis*. It was a circular seal and contained the following: *Gajalakṣmī*, that is, an effigy of the goddess *Lakṣmī* with two elephants on two sides, pouring water on her; legend, '*Śrimaṭkarṇadevah*'; and *Nandi* (bull)[6]

(4) *The seal of the Paramāras*. On their seal figured the effigy of a *Garuḍa*.[7]

(5) *The seals of the Vākāṭakas*.

(i) a round seal with a metrical legend but without any device.[8]

(ii) a seal, bearing the figures of the sun, the moon and a flower at the bottom and with a metrical legend, '*Vākāṭaka lalāmasya Kramaprāptanṛpa-śriyah*| *Jananyā yuvarājasya śāsanaṁ ripu-śāśanaṁ*||.[9]

[1] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, No. 1.
[2] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XXV, p. 52ff; Fleet, *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 256ff.
[3] Fleet, *Ind. Ant.* XIX, p. 225.
[4] *Memoirs of the Archæological Survey of India No.* 66.
[5] *Banskhera Copper-plate Inscription* of Harṣa (dated 628 A.D., *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. IV, p. 208.
[6] *The Goharwa Plates of Karṇadeva*, *Ep. Ind.* XI, 139.
[7] *Indian Antiquary* VI, pp. 48ff.
[8] Fleet, (*C.I.I.*, Vol. III, pl. XXXVIII; *Ep. Ind.* XXII, p. 173.
[9] *The Poona Plate of Prabhāvatigupta*, *Ep. Ind.* XV, 41.

(6) *The seal of the Traikuṭakas and the Kaṭaccuris.* Their seal is round with a legend containing the name of the ruler, for instance '*Alla-Śakti*'.[1]

(7) *The seals of the Chālukyas of Badami.*

(i) circular or oval seal bearing the representation of a boar (*varāha*), without any legend.[2]

(ii) the seals of the governors and feudatories of the *Chālukyas* contain the figure of a boar and a legend both.[3]

(8) *The seals of the Rāṣṭrakūtas.*

(i) a seal with a figure of winged and cross-legged *Garuḍa.*[4]

(ii) a seal with a figure of *Garuḍa* and floral designs.[5]

(iii) a seal with the figure of a *Garuḍa* with a snake in each of its paws, figures of *Gaṇapati* and *Pārvatī* and representations of chauri, lamp, *svas-lika*, *liṅga* and *aṅkuśa.*[6]

(9) *The seals of the Chālukyas of Kalyāṇa.*

(i) a seal of the type of the early Chālukyas of Badami,

(ii) a circular seal, bearing the effigy of a boar, with a legend in the Nāgri characters, '*Śrimad-Arikeśariṇah*'.[7]

(10). *The seals of the feudatories of the Chālukyas.*[8]

(i) The *Kadambas* of Goa had a seal, bearing the device of the lion.

(ii) The *Raṭṭaṣ* of Saundatti had the effigy of an elephant on their seal.

(iii) The Raṭṭas of Sindas adopted a seal on which a tiger or a tiger with a deer figured.

[1] *QBISM*, XX.
[2] Lüders, H., *A List of Brāhmī Ins.* etc. Nos. 12, 17, 39, 48.
[3] Ibid. Nos. 11, 32.
[4] Ibid. Nos. 92, 133.
[5] Ibid. Nos. 97, 107.
[6] Ibid. Nos. 133, 147.
[7] Ibid. No. 369.
[8] B.G., 1. 2. 299 note 4.

(iv) The *Guṭṭas* of Guttal preferred a lion on their seal.

(11) *The seal of the Yādavas and the Śilāhāras.* They followed the pattern of the *Rāṣṭrakūtas* and had the device of a *Garuḍa* on their seal and banner.[1]

(12) *The seal of the Pallavas.* It bore the effigy of a tiger couchant and facing to the right.[2]

(13) *The seal of the Eastern Chālukyas.* It had the device of a boar; below it the legend—'*Tribhuvanāṅkuśa*'; in upper portion of the seal the devices of the crecent, the sun and a goad; below the representation of a flower.[3]

(14) *The seal of the Cholas.* In the centre of the seal figures the device of a boar; above the device there was the legend; above the legend the devices of the moon and a goad; below the boar two lamps on right and left with a lotus flower in between; on the sides of the boar flowers and a conch-shell.[4]

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[1] List. Nos. 198, 200, 232.
[2] *Indian Antiquary*, V. plate opposite p. 50.
[3] Ibid. Vol. VI, pp. 48 ff.
[4] Burnell, *S.I.P.* Pl. XXXIII facing p. 106.

CHAPTER VIII

TYPES OF RECORDS.

1. *Main Types.*

Broadly speaking there were two types of records or documents—(1) royal or official and (2) private or individual. The ancient inscriptions of India can be grouped under these heads. The later treatises on *Dharma-śāstra* also corroborate this classification. For instance, *Vasiṣṭha* quoted in the *Smṛti-chandrikā* says, "Records are of two varieties, *Laukikaṁ* (belonging to the people) and *Rājakīyaṁ* (royal or official)".[1] Some writers quoted as *Saṁgrahakāras* agree with *Vasiṣṭha* and divide records under two heads—(1) *Rājakiyaṁ* (royal or official) and *Jānapadaṁ* (pertaining to the people).[2] Royal records were issued either by kings themselves or by their vassals, provincial governors and high ministers, who had necessary authority to do so. For private records common people were responsible, though in many respect they imitated the royal records. Royal records were further divided into four classes :[3]

(1) *Śāsanaṁ* (writ, edict or instruction; in mediæval times it was used in the sense of a land-grant),

(2) *Jayapatraṁ* (legal decision)

(3) *Ājñāpatraṁ* (order) and

(4) *Prajñāpanaṁ* (proclamation).

2. *Types on the Basis of the Dharmaśāstras.*

On the basis of the Dharmaśāstra literature these four classes can be defined and explained as follows :

[1] लौकिकं राजकीयं च लेख्यं विद्याद् द्विलक्षणम् । *Vyavahāra*, I. 14.

[2] राजकीयं जानपदं लिखितं द्विविधं स्मृतम् । Ibid.

[3] शासनं प्रथमं ज्ञेयं जयपत्रं तथा परम् ।
आज्ञाप्रज्ञापनपत्रे राजकीयं चतुर्विधम् ।।
Vasiṣṭha, Smṛtichandrikā, Vyavahāra, I. 14

(1) *Śāsanaṁ*. In the Yājñavalkya Smṛti we get the following definition of a *Śāsanaṁ* :

"Having given a plot of land or made a permanent edowment the king should cause a record to be prepared for the information of the future good kings. The king should further cause a permanent writ to be made on a piece of cloth or copper-plate impressed with his seal and autograph and containing his genealogy, personal eulogy, the name of the donee, the quantity of the gift, the boundaries of the plot and the date of the deed."[1]

(2) *Jayapatraṁ*. It is explained: "Having himself gone through the legal procedure and listened to the expounder of law, the king should issue a legal decision for public information."[2]

(3) *Ājñāpatraṁ*. Vasiṣṭha defines it as "That is *Ājñāpatraṁ* through which order is sent to *Sāmantas* (vassals), high officials of the state, e.g. provincial governors etc."[3]

(4) *Prajñāpanaṁ*. The same authority defines it as "That is *Prajñāpanaṁ* through which a deed is proclaimed to the *Ṛtvik* (sacrificial priest), rhe *Purohita* (minister in charge of the religious department of the state, the *Āchārya* (preceptor), the *Mānyas* (respectable persons), and the *Abhyarhitas* (persons entitled or concerned)."[4]

[1] दत्वा भूमिं निबन्धं वा कृत्वा लेख्यं तु कारयेत् ।
आगामिभद्रनृपतिपरिज्ञानाय पार्थिवः ।।
पटे वा ताम्रपटे वा स्वमुद्रोपरिचिह्नितम् ।
अभिलेख्यात्मनो वंश्यानात्मानं च महीपतिः ।।
प्रतिग्रहपरिमाणं दानच्छेदोपवर्णनम् ।
स्वहस्तकालसम्पन्नं शासनं कारयेत् स्थिरम् ।। I. 317-19.

[2] व्यवहारान् स्वयं दृष्ट्वा श्रुत्वा प्राड्विवाकतः ।
जयपत्रं ततो दद्यात् परिज्ञानाय पार्थिवः ।। Vyāsa, *Smṛti-Chandrika*, *Vyavahāra*, I. 14.

[3] सामन्तेष्वथ भृत्येषु राष्टपालादिकेषु वा ।
कार्यमादिश्यते येन तदाज्ञापत्रमुच्यते ।। ibid.

[4] ऋत्विकपुरोहिताचार्यमान्येष्वभ्यर्हितेषु च ।
कार्यं निवेद्यते येन पत्रं प्रज्ञापनाय तत् ।। ibid.

Under royal or official records *Bṛhaspati* includes *Prasāda-lekhya* (document recording something given by the king out of satisfaction with a person). It is defined as "where the king, having been satisfied with the service or heroic deed of a person, makes territorial or some other kind of gift through writing, that is *Prasādalekhya*."[1]

The *Jānapadaṁ* (private) records are described by Vyāsa in the following words: "The writer of a well-known place should write a private document, mentioning royal genealogy, year, month, fortnight and day."[2] It was this type of prescription which made the private documents of political importance and helpful in the reconstruction of dynastic history. Private documents were concerned with various types of transactions. The *Smṛti* authorities required fixed forms specially for contractual and monetary transactions. *Yājñavalkya* lays down: "Whatever matter is decided by mutual consent that should be recorded with the names of the witnesses and that of the *Dhanika* (lender of money)".[3]

It should be observed here that the available specimens of ancient Indian inscriptions in their earlier period helped the evolution of the Smṛtic rules regarding the forms of documents and later on where influenced by these rules. It can be verified, to a great extent, by comparing the styles and contents of the existing inscriptions with rules given in the *Smṛtis*.

3. *Types on the Basis of the Contents of Inscriptions.*

If we analyse the contents of inscriptions, they are capable of grouping under the following heads:

(i) Commercial
(ii) Magical

[1] देशादिकं यत्र राजा लिखितेन प्रयच्छति ।
सेवाशौर्यादिना तुष्टः प्रसादलिखितं हि तत् ।। ibid.

[2] लिखेज्जानपदं लेख्यं प्रसिद्धस्थानलेखकः ।
राजवंशक्रमयुतं वर्षमासार्द्धवासरैः ।। ibid.

[3] यः कश्चिदर्थो निष्णातः स्वरुच्या परस्परम् ।
लेख्यं तु साक्षिमत् कार्यं तस्मिन् धनिकपूर्वकम् ।। Vyavahāra, VI. 84.

(iii) Religious and Didactic
(iv) Administrative
(v) Eulogistic
(vi) Votive or Dedicative
(vii) Donative
(viii) Commemorative
(ix) Literary.

(1) *Commercial.* The earliest specimens of this type are found on seals discovered in the Indus Valley at Harappa and Mohenjodaro. Some of the seals were evidently used for stamping the bales of merchandise and individual mercantile commodities like potteries.[1] "It is possible that the shorter inscriptions (on the seals) are simply the owner's name and the longer ones include titles that the owner of the seal happen to possess."[2] It seems that these seals were used by sea-faring traders engaged in foreign trades. The periods of Indian history subsequent to the Indus Valley Civilization have not yielded so far specimens of commercial seals or any extensive record of commercial nature. It should be observed in this connection that the *Nigamas* and the *Śreṇis* (commercial corporations) had the power of minting their coins and they must have possessed their seals also, aud must have an extensive use of writing for their commercial purposes, though such commercial records on perishable materials could not survive and they were, perhaps, not regarded worthy of preservation for a long time.[3] Accidently some records of commercial nature can be found embedded in the inscriptions of other types. For instance, a few lines of commercial intent find their place in the Mandasore Stone Inscription of the time of *Kumāragupta* and *Bandhu-varman*, dated *Mālava* Era 529. These lines can be translated as follows: "A women, though endowed with youth and beauty (and) adorned with the arrangement of golden necklaces and betel-leaves and flowers, does not go to

[1] *Mohenjodarao and The Indus Civilization*, Vol. II, p. 397.
[2] Ibid, p. 381.
[3] Cf. The tribal coinage of the Punjab, Rajasthana and Madhya Bharata, Allan, *British Museum Catalognes*, Ancient India.

meet her lover in a secret place, until she has put on a pair of coloured silken cloths. So, the whole of this region of the earth is adorned through them, as if with a silken garment, agreeable to touch, variegated with divisions of different colours and pleasing to the eyses."[1] They contain an elegant and attrac- tive piece of advertisement.

(2) *Magical.* The Indus Valley furnishes the earliest specimens of this type also. Many of the so-called seals were really speaking amulets containing magical formulæ on them. "That the impressions on baked clay and faience were regarded as talismatic seems likely, though they also have been ex-votos. One tablet stamped with a seal impression is pierced with a very roughly made holes (Pl. CXVI,1), with evident purpose of securing it to something, possibly to the clothing. Moreover, all of the tablets whic are stamped on one side only have smooth backs, which shows that they had never adhered to any thing and, therefore, were not labels for merchandise. Again, many of the objects impressed with seal-impressions were inscribed on more than one side, which would be suitable in an amulet but could serve no other purpose. Also some were coated with a red slip, which is never present and would be useless on sealings."[2] As the seals are not deciphered as yet, it is difficult to be sure about the contents of the inscriptions. The inscriptions very likely contain the names of, and invocations to, the deities represented by the animals peculiar to their sects, on the seals. The following animals generally figure on the amulets and they may represent deities mentioned against them;[3]

Antelope	...	Moon
Buffalo	...	*Yama*

[1] तारुण्यकान्त्युपचितोऽपि सुवर्णहारताम्बूलपुष्पविधिनासमलंकृतोऽपि ।
नारीजनः प्रियमुपैति न तावदश्र्या यावन्न पट्टमयवस्त्रयुगानिधत्ते ॥
स्पर्शवता वर्णान्तरविभागचित्रेण नेत्रसुभगेन ।
यैः सकलमिदं क्षितितलमलकृतं पट्टवस्त्रेण ॥ Fleet *C.I.L.* Vol III, No. 18 Verses 20-21.

[2] *Mohenjodaro and the Indus Civilization*, Vol. II, p. 397.

[3] Ibid., p. 399.

Brahmi-bull	...	*Śiva*
Composit animal	...	X
Elephant	...	*Indra*
Goat	...	*Brahmā* (?)
Hare	...	Moon
Human figure	...	X
Monkey	...	X
Rhinoceros	...	River
Short-horned bull	...	*Śiva*
Tiger	...	Goddess *Durgā* (?) (= Mother-goddess)
Two-headed animal		X

Magical formulæ continued to be written on metals as well as on birch-bark (*Bhūrjapatra*) and other perishable materials.

(3) *Religious and Didactic.* This type includes all those inscriptions, which deal with the statement, the position and the preaching of religion or morality. It is very likely that some of the so-called seals and tablets discovered in the Indus valley at Harappa and Mohenjodaro were objects of worship, containing religious formulæ of various sects, and they were not used as amulets carried with person. The next set of inscriptions of this type are found in the religious edicts (*Dhaṁma-lipi*) of Aśoka belonging to the third century B.C. In the edicts of Aśoka these inscriptions are definitely called '*Dhaṁma-lipi*' or religious records.[1] The religious and didactic nature of Aśoka's edicts will be borne out by the following extract from his Rock Edict No. IV : "As has not happened for many hundred years before, have now increased, through king *Priyadarśi*, Beloved of the gods, instruction in *Dhamma* (religion), abstention from the slaughter of animate beings, abstention from injury to creatures, seemly behaviour to relatives, seemly behaviour to the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Śramaṇas*, hearkening to father and mother, hearkening to the elders.

[1] से अज यदा अयं धम्मलिपी लिखिता। अयं ध्रमदिपि दिपिस्त। Aśokan R.E., No. 1, Girnar Version; Aśokan R.E., No. 5 Shahbazgadhi Version, Hultzsch, *C.I.I.*, Vol. I.

The practice of *Dhaṁma* of this and other manifold kinds has grown, and king *Priyadarśī*, Beloved of the gods, will (still more) cause this practice of *Dhaṁma* to grow. The sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons of king *Priyadarśī* will cause the practice of *Dhaṁma* to grow until the æon of destruction (and) abiding in *Dhaṁma* and virtuous conduct, will give instruction in *Dhaṁma* and virtuous conduct; for the most excellent act is instruction in *Dhaṁma*..."[1] The Besanagar Garuḍa-Pillar Inscriptions of the time of Bhāgabhadra, one of the later *Śuṅga* kings, though votive in character, contains a moral precept in the second part of it: "There are three immortal paths (and), if properly followed here, they lead to the heaven ; (these are) self-control, renunciation and freedom from carelessness."[2] In the subsequent periods of Indian history we find very few inscriptions of pure religious and moral character; religious and moral contents are found mixed up with votive or donative materials. For instance, in the Mandasore Stone Inscription of the time of Kumāragupta II, dated *Mālava* Era 493 and 529, a didactic and philosophical note is struck in the following lines :" Having reflected that the world is very unsteady, like the moving by wind of the charming sprout and ear ornaments, of the *Vidyādharis*; and similarly the life of a man and also the vast stores of wealth, their mind became steady and inclined towards virtue."[3]

(4) *Administrative* : The first set of inscriptions belonging to this type are found among the edicts of Aśoka, though they

[1] मारिसे बहुहि न भूतपुवे तारिसे अज बढ़िते देवानं पियस पियदसिनो राञो धम्मानुसस्टिया अनारंभो प्राणानं अविहीसा भूतानं जातीनं संपटिपती वम्हण-समणानं संपटिपती मातरि पितरि सुस्रुसा थैर सस्रुसा एस अजे च वहुविधे धंमचरणे बढिते बढयिसति चेव देवानं प्रियो प्रियदसि राजा धंमचरणं इदं······।

Ibid.

[2] त्रिनि अमुतपदानि इअ सु–अनुठितानि । नेयंति स्वगं दम चाग अप्रमाद ॥

Arch. Sur. India, *Annual Report*, 1908-09.

[3] विद्याधरीरुचिरपल्लवकर्णपूरवातेरितास्थिरतरं प्रविचिन्त्य लोकं ।
मानुष्यमर्थनिचयांश्च तथा विशालांस्तेषां शुभा मतिरभूदचला ततस्तु ॥

Fleet : C.I.I. *Vol. III*, No. 18, Verse, 22.

were written under the influence of religion and morality. A few extracts will suffice to illustrate it :

"Everywhere in my dominions the *Yuktas*, the *Rajjukas* and the *Prādeśikas* shall proceed on circuit every five years as well for this purpose (for the instruction of *Dhaṁma*) as for other business......"[1]

"Now, for a long time past previously, there were no *Dhaṁma Mahāmātras*. They were created by me when I had been consecrated thirteen years. They have been set to work among all sects for the establishment of *Dhaṁma*, promotion of *Dhaṁma*, and for the welfare and happiness of the righteous."[2]

"This, therefore, I have done, namely, that at all hours and in all place,—whether I am eating or am in the closed (female) apartments, in the inner chamber. in the royal stables, on horseback or in pleasure orchards, the Reporters may report peoples' business to me. Peoples' business I do at all places. And when in respect of any thing that I personally order by word of mouth for being issued or proclaimed, or, again, (if) in respect of any emergent work that may superimpose itself on the *Mahāmātras*, there is any division or rejection in the council, I have so commanded that it shall be forthwith communicated to me at all places and at all hours."[3]

"By command of the Beloved of gods, the *Mahāmātras* of *Tosali* (or *Samāpā*) who are the City Judiciaries should be addressed thus : Whatever I perceive (with the mind), I desire—what ?—that I put it into action ; and I initiate it through the proper means. And I deem this to be the principal means to the end, namely, instructions to you.

[1] मया इदं आञ्पितं:--सर्वत विजिते मम युता च राजुके च प्रादेशिके च पंचसु पंचसु वासेसु अनुसंयानं नियातु । *Aśokan* R.E. *III.*

[2] अतिकांतं अन्तरं न भूतपूर्वं धंममहामाता नाम । त मया तैदसवासाभिसितन धंम-महामाता कला । ते सवपासंडेसु व्यापता धामंधिस्टानाय धंमबढ़िया हिद सुखाय चा धंमयुतसा । *Aśokan* R.E. *V.*

[3] त मया एवं कटं । सवे काले भुंजमानस मे··· · पटिवेदका स्टिता अथे मे जनस पटिवेदेथ इति । *Aśokan* RE. *VI*·

> You have indeed been set over many thousads of lives in order that we may gain the affection of good men."[1]

An example of pure administrative inscriptions is found in the Sohgaura Copper-plate Inscription of the third century B.C. :

> "The order of the *Mahāmātras* of *Śrāvasti* from *Mānavāśītikaṭa* (a place name). In the auspicious village of *Uṣāgrāma* two granaries have been established. During famines and other adverse circumstances grains (from these) should be distributed in the villages, namely, *Trikaveṇī*, *Māthura*, *Chañchu*, *Mayudāma* and *Bhallaka*. This (distribution) should not be obstructed."[2]

Another instance of this type may be found in the Junagarh Rock Inscription of Rudradāman I, dated 150 A.D., though it is highly overlaid with eulogistic and commemorative elements. It deals with the restoration of the bund of a lake called *Sudarśana*, which was breached by a violent cyclone accompanied with a huge flood.[3] The Junagrah Rock Inscription of Skandagupta, dated 455-56 and 457-58 A.D.[4], also belongs to this type and resembles the inscription of Rudradāman in details. Its main theme is the restoration of the *Sudarśana* lake, which was breached for the second time by excessive rains. The relevant portions of this inscription read as follows :

> "Now when in course of time the season of clouds set in, tearing up the hot season by means of clouds, vast quantity of water rained down unceasingly for a long time, by reason of which the lake *Sudarśana* suddenly burst on the sixth day, at night of the month *Prausthapada* in a century of years increased by thirty and also six

[1] देवानं पियस वचनेन तोसलियं समापायं महामात नगलवियोहालका हे वतविय···।
Separate Kalinga Edicts Asoka, No. 1.

[2] सवतियान महमतन ससने मनवसिति-कड। सिलिमाते-उसगमे व एते कोठगलनि। लियवेनि-माथुल-चचु-मोदाभ-भलकन वलकयि यति अतियायिकय। नो गहितवय।
Ep. Iud. Vol. XXII, p. 2.

[3] स्वस्मात कोशात् महता धनौघेन अनतिमहता च कालेन···सुदर्शनतरं कातिमिति।
Ep. Ind. Vol. VIII, p. 42 ff.

[4] Fleet, C. *I. I.* Vol. VIII, p. 2 ff.

more according to the calculation of the Gupta era." verses 26-27.[1]

"...Acting in a respectable way and making an immeasurable expenditure of wealth, built after great efforts in a period of two months on the first day of the first half of the month of *Vaiśākha* in the year 137, the celebrated lake *Sudarśāna*, not contaminated by nature, hundred cubits in length, sixty-eight cubits in breadth and seven *puruṣas* (man's height) in depth and two hundred cubits (in diametre?) with well set stones so that it may last for eternal time."—verses 35-37.[2]

Besides, there is a large number of subsequent copper-plate inscriptions, found in the north and the south and donative in purpose, which are called *Śāsana*s (royal writs) and contain substantial administrative materils. For instance, the following relevant portion from the Banskhera Copper-plate Inscription of *Harṣa* will corroborate this statement :

"*Harṣa*...issues commands to the vassal kings, police officers, officer in charge of land survey, the representative of the king, the prince councellor, the overseer, the district magistrate and the collector, the regular and the irregular soldiery, servants and others and the inhabitants that have assembled at *Markaṭasāgara*, situated in the western *Paṭhaka* of the *Aṅgadiya* district in the *Ahichhatra* province :

Be it know to you that...there is granted by me the above mentioned village with its own boundaries, land tax, all taxes accruing to the royal family, immunites ; with its area separated from the district ; to be enjoyed by sons and grand-sons ; lasting as long as the moon, the sun and the earth do ; in accordance with the custom

[1] अथ क्रमेणाम्बुद-काल आगते निदाधकालं प्रविदार्य तोयदैः ।
ववर्ष तोयं वहुसंततं चिरं सुदर्शनं येन विभेद चात्वरात् ।।
सम्वत्सराणामधिके शते तु त्रिंशद्भिरन्यैरपि षड्भिरेव ।
रात्रौ दिने प्रौष्ठपदस्य षष्ठे गुप्तप्रकाले गणनां विधाय ।। Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

known as *Bhumichhidra-nyāya* to Bhaṭṭa Bālachandra and Bhadrasvāmī in consonance with the rules of formal acceptance and complete gift ; It should be respected by you , and by the residents (of the village), in an obedient manner, should be paid to them all revenue arising from weighing, measuring, regular taxation, taxation for the personal enjoyment of the king, gold etc. : They should also serve and honour them."[1]

Similarly the Basim Copper-plate Inscription of Vindhyaśakti II[2], the Poona Copper-plate Inscription of Prabhāvatiguptā,[3] the Hirahaḍagalli Copper-plate Inscriptions of Śivaskandavarman[4] possess a sufficient amount of administrative details.

(5) *Eulogistic.* Inscriptions dealing with eulogy (*Praśasti*) form the most important type from the political point of view, as generally they furnish the following items of information :

(i) The name and the genealogy of the ruler concerned
(ii) The early career of the king.
(iii) His military, political and administrative achievements.
(iv) The existence of contemporary states coming into contact with him and the inter-state relation.
(v) Political ideal and practices; administrative system.
(vi) The personal accomplishments of the king.
(vii) His patronage, munificence and charity.
(viii) Mythological or Puranic allusions by way of comparision and similes.

[1] श्रींहर्ष········समुपगतान्महासामन्त-महाराज-दौस्साध-साधनिक-प्रमातारराजस्थनीय-कुमारमात्योपरिक-विषयपति-भट-चाट-सेवकादीन्प्रतिवासिजानपदाश्च समाज्ञापपतिः-विदिनमस्तु यथायमुपरिलिखितग्रामः स्वसीमापर्यन्तः सोद्रङ्ग सर्वराज्यकुलाभाव्य-प्रत्यायसमेतः सर्वपरिहृतपरिहारो विषयादुद्धतपिण्डः पुत्रपौत्रानुगश्चन्द्रार्कक्षिति कालीनो भूमिच्छिद्रन्यायेन मया·····भट्टबालचन्द्र भद्रस्वामिभ्यां प्रतिग्रहधर्मेणा-ग्रहारत्वेन प्रतिपादितो विदित्वा भवद्भिः समनुमन्तव्यः प्रतिवासिजानपदैरप्याज्ञा-श्रवणविधेयैर्भूत्वा यथा—समुचिततुल्य मेय-भाग-भोगकर-हिण्यादिप्रत्याया एतयो-रेवोपनेयाः सेवोपस्थानं च करणीयमित्यपिच । *Ep. Ind.* IV, p. 208.

[2] *Indian Hist. Quart.*XVI, p. 182 ff.

[3] *Ep. Ind.*, XV, p. 41 ff.

[4] *Ep. Ind.*, 1, p. 5 ff.

The one common defect, from which eulogistic inscriptions suffer, is their tendency to exaggerate the achievements of the king. Exaggeration are, however, found mostly in the general statements; specific statements are comparatively sober and realistic.

Eulogistic inscriptions can further be sub-divided into two groups—(1) pure eulogy and (2) mixed with other types. The edicts of Aśoka, which describe his *Dhamma-vijaya* (conquest through piety), form a category by themselves. They have all the important elements of an eulogy, but they lack in motive, style and vigour necessary for it. Here the motive is not self-glorification but the vindication and statement of piety to be understood and followed by others; style is a matter of fact, very often prosaic and sometimes dull; calmness of temper eliminates vigour which marks the later eulogy of militant kings. The Thirteenth Rock Edict of Aśoka[1] will fully illustrate this point:

> "The country of *Kaliṅga* was conquered when king *Priyadarśin*, Beloved of the gods, had been anointed eight years. One hundred and fifty thousand were therefrom captured, one hundred thousand were there slain, and many times as many died...This is the remorse of the Beloved of the gods on having conquered *Kaliṅga*...But this conquest is considered to be the chiefest by the Beloved of the gods, which is conquest through *Dhamma*. And that again has been achieved by the Beloved of the gods here and in the bordering dominions even as far as six hundred *yojanas*...And this edict of *Dhamma* has been recorded for this purpose.—Why?—in order that my sons and grandsons, whoever they may be, may not think of a new conquest as worth achieving,... they may observe forbearance and lightness of punishment, and that they may regard that to be the real conquest which is a conquest through *Dhamma*. That is good for this world and the next. May all their strong attachement be attachement to exertion. That is good for this world and the next".

[1] Hultzsch, C. I. I. Vol. I.

The first specimen of a pure eulogy is found in the Hathigumpha inscription of Khāravela.[1] It is a unique document, which describes exhaustively and in glowing terms the achievements of Khāravela in a perfect chronological order. The following analysis of this inscription will reveal what an eulogy (*praśasti*) intended to be:

(i) The auspicious symbols--*Baddhamaṅgala* and *Svastika*--on the upper left corner of the inscription.

(ii) Salutation to the *arhatas* and the *siddhas*.

(iii) The original stock of Khāravela, *Aila*; his royal title, *mahāraja*; his epithet, *mahāmeghavāhana*; his dynastic epithet, *chetirāja-vasa-vardhana*; his territorial sovereign title, *Kalingādhipati;* his personal name *Śri* Khāravela.

(iv) The early career of Khāravela upto the fifteenth year of his age, full of games and sports.

(v) His education in different branches of learning lasting for the next nine years.

(vi) The coronation of Khāravela in the twenty-fourth year of his age.

(vii) In the first year of his reign, he undertook restoration of damaged buildings, constructions of ponds and lakes, plantation of gardens and recreation of the subjects.

(viii) In the second year of his reign Kharavela sent a huge army towards the west in defiance of Sātakarṇi and threatened *Asikanagara* on the bank of the *Kṛṣṇā* river.

(ix) In the third year of his reign, he arranged for social festivities for the recreation of the citizens of his capital.

(x) In the fourth year of his reign, he entered the old royal palace of Kaliṅga, *Vidyādharādhivāsa* and subdued the *Raṭhikas* and the *Bhojakas*.

(xi) In the fifth year he caused an aqueduct enter the city, which was originally constructed in 300 Nanda Era.

[1] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XX, p. 72ff.

(xii) In the sixth year he performed the *Rājasūya* sacrifice followed by charity and beneficence to the people.

(xiii) In the seventh year he controlled certain potentates.

(viv) In the eighth year, having captured *Goratha-giri*, he attacked Rājagṛha and forced the Greek king *Diyumeta* to fall back upon Mathura. To celebrate his victory he offered sumptuous gifts to the Brāhmaṇas.

(xv) In the ninth year he built the palace, *Mahāvijaya-prāsada* at the cost of thirty-eight lacs of coins.

(xvi) In the tenth year he launched upon the conquest of *Bhāratavarṣa*.

(xvii) In the eleventh year he took away the riches of the subdued kings and raised the palace of *Pithuṇḍa* to the ground. He also broke the confederacy of the *Tramira* (Dravida) country.

(xviii) In the twelfth year, frightening the kings of *Uttarāpatha* (northern India) and causing great fear to the *Magadhas* he made his elephants drink the waters of the Gaṅgā. He compelled the Magadha king Bahasatimitra to bow down at his feet, took back the Jina-image which had been carried away by Nandarāja and looted the wealth of Aṅga and Magadha. He also subdued the *Pāṇḍya* king.

(xix) In the thirteenth year for the residence of the Jain ascetics he excavated cave-dwellings at *Kumāri-parvata* and decorated them gorgeously.

(xx) Śri Khāravela was the king of auspiciousness, the king of prosperity, the king among the *Bhikṣus*, the king of piety, the seer, listener and realiser of good, endowed with special virtues, the worshipper of all religious sects, the respector of all religious shrines, the possessor of army which was never daunted, the wielder of discus, whose dominions were well-protected, whose reign was fully established, who was born in the family of the royal sages and who was the performer of great victories.

(xxi) *Kalpa-taru* on the right-hand lower corner.

Another specimen of a pure eulogy is the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta,[1] which set a model for the subsequent eulogies of the great rulers in ancient India. Its contents can be analysed as follows :

(i) Some early military exploits of Samudragupta.

(ii) The literary attainments of the king.

(iii) The selection of Samudragupta as the crown-prince to succeed his father.

(iv) The heroic and superhuman activities—military and political—of Samudragupta, which induced and compelled other kings to submit.

(v) The victory of Samudragupta over the *Nāga* princes Achyuta, Nāgasena, Gaṇapatināga etc. in the first war of *Aryāvarta.*

(vi) The capture of Pātaliputra and the uprooting of the *Kota* family by Samudragupta.

(vii) The religious and literary activities of the king.

(viii) The *viruda* (epithet) of the king, *Parākramāṅka.*

(ix) The military qualities of the king.

(x) The conquest of *Dakṣināpatha* and the policy of a *Dharmavijayī* (subjugationist) followed by Samudragupta.

(xi) The second war of *Aryāvarta* and the policy of an *Asuravijayī* (annexationist) followed by Samudragupta.

(xii) The subjugation of the kings of the forest regions (in the *Vindhya* ranges).

(xiii) The subjugation of the frontier kings toward N. E.

(xiv) The subjugation of the frontier republican peoples towards S.W.

(xv) The re-instation of the fallen dynasties.

(xvi) The subordinate alliance of the *Śaka*-Kuṣaṇas in the extreme N.W. of India with Samudragupta.

[1] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, Vol.III, No. 1.

(xvii) The subordinate alliance of the peoples of Ceylon and other islands in the Indian ocean with Samudragupta.

(xviii) The unrivalled paramountcy of Samudragupta.

(xix) The virtuous deeds of Samudragupta.

(xx) His functional comparison with gods--*Dhanada*, *Varuṇa*, *Indra* and *Antaka* (*Yama*).

(xxi) His efficient administration through his officers.

(xxii) His excellence in the art of music.

(xxiii) His high literary attainments and his title *Kavirāja*.

(xxiv) Samudragupta as the shelter of the world.

(xxv) The genealogy of the Gupta dynasty from Śri-Gupta to Samudragupta. The royal title *Mahārājādhirāja* for Samudragupta.

(xxvi) The erection of Victory Pillar which is compared with an arm of the earth proclaiming the fame of Samudragupta.

(xxvii) The fame of Samudragupta spread over the three worlds.

(xxviii) The *praśasti* (eulogy) is called a *Kāvya* (poetic composition).

(xxix) The author of eulogy Hariṣeṇa, who was *Sāndhivigrahika* (Minister for Peace and War), *Kumārāmātya* (an official enjoying the status of a prince) and *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka* (Commander-in-chief of Army) and the son of *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka* Dhruvabhuti.

(xxx) Tilabhaṭṭa, the executor of the document.

(xxxi) The wish that the *prasaśti* (eulogy) may be for the happiness and welfare of all beings.

The number of mixed eulogies is legion. Every possible occasion for writing a permenent document was used for immortalising the glories of the contemporary rulers and their ancestors. Every official record—donative, dedicative or commemorative—and almost every private record of the same types contained the eulogy of the reigning sovereign. The latter also contained

the eulogy of persons responsible for documents and deeds. The most important specimens of mixed eulogy are found in the Nasik cave Inscription of Uṣavadāta,[1] the Junagarh Rock Inscription of Rudradāman I,[2] the Nasik Cave Inscription of Gautamī Balaśri,[3] the Nagarjunikonda Inscriptions of Vīrapuruṣadatta,[4] the Mehrauli Iron Pillar Inscription of Chandra,[5] the Mandasor Stone Inscription of the time of Kumāragupta II and Bandhuvarman,[6] the Junagarh Rock Inscription of Skandagupta,[7] the Bhitari Stone Pillar Inscription of Skandagupta,[8] the Mandasor Stone Pillar Inscription of Yaśodharman,[9] the Harha Stone Inscription of Iśānavarman,[10] the Aihole Stone Inscription of the time of Pulikeśin II,[11] the Talagunda Stone Pillar Inscription of the time of Sāntivarman[12] etc.

(6) *Votive or Dedicative.* Indian palæography is as rich in the votive or dedicative type of inscriptions as in eulogy. It is not unlikely that some of the tablets found at Harappa and Mohenjodaro contain votive inscriptions.[13] The first deciphered example of this type is found in the short Piprahwa Buddhist Vase Inscription which records the dedication of the relic casket of Lord Buddha:

> "This relic-casket of Lord Buddha dedicated by the Sākya brethern of the Famed One, with their sisters, sons and wives"[14].

[1] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. VIII, p. 78ff.
[2] Ibid. Vol. VIII, p. 42ff.
[3] Ibid. Vol. VIII, p. 60ff.
[4] Ibid. Vol. XX, p. 16, 19ff.
[5] Fleet, *C.I.I.* Vol. III, No. f32.
[6] Ibid. No. 18.
[7] Ibid. No. 14.
[8] Fleet, C.*I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 13ff.
[9] Ibid. No. 33.
[10] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XIV, p. 115.
[11] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. VI, p. 1.
[12] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. VIII, p. 31ff.
[13] Marshall, *Moheniodaro And Indus Civilization*, Vol. II, p.
[14] सुकितिभतिनं सभगिनीकनं सपुतदलनं ।
इयं सलिलनिधने बुधस भगवते सकियानं ॥ *Ind. Ant.*, XXXVI, 117ff.

A more evolved specimen of this type is tthe Besnagar Garuḍa Pillar Inscription of Heliodoros.[1] All the rudiments of a full-fledged dedicative or votive inscription are present in it. The following analysis of its contents will bear it out:

(i) The name and epithet of the deity (*devadevasa Vāsudevasa*) to whom the pillar was dedicated.

(ii) The type (*garuḍa-dhvaja*) and the erection of the pillar.

(iii) The person responsible for it (Heliodoros), with his epithet (*Bhāgavata*), with the name of his father (Dion), with his residence (*Takṣaśilā*), his status and designation (*Yavana-duta*=Greek ambassador) and the name of the king (Antialkidos) whom he represented.

(iv) The name of the king (Bhāgabhadra) ruling over the area, with his mother's name (*Kautsī*), with his royal title (*mahāraja*) and epithet (*trātā=protector*).

(v) The regnal year of the victorious regin 14 (*Vasena chatudasena rajen vadhamānasa*).

(vi) A moral saying.

Dedicative inscriptions mainly deal with the instalation of images and the erection of temples. One of the most developed form of the dedicative type is to be found in the Mandasor Inscription of the time of Kumāragupta II and Bandhuvarman. Its contents are as follows:

(i) The first three invocatory stanzas in salutation to the god Sun.

[1] देवदेवस वासुदेवस गरुडध्वजे अयं
कारिते इअ हेलियोयोदोरेण भाग–
वतेन दियसपुत्रेण तरवसिलाकेन
योनदूतेन आगतेन महाराजस
अंतलिकितस उपंता सकासं रञो
कोसीपुत्रस भागभद्रस त्रातारस
वसेन चतुदसेन राजेन वधमानस ॥
त्रिनि अमुतपदानि इअ सु अनुठितानि
नेयंति स्वगं दम चाग अप्रमाद ।
Arch. Sur. Ind. Annual Report, 1908-09, p. 126.

[2] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, Vol. III. No. 18.

(ii) The description of the country Lāṭa where the guild of weavers migrated from.

(iii) The attraction of the town Daśapura where the guild came from Lāṭa.

(iv) The description of the town Daśapura under *(a)* the town as the crest-jewel of the world, *(b)* its lakes, *(c)* its gardens, *(d)* its houses and *(e)* inhabitants, belonging to various professions and of excellent characters.

(v) The eulogy of the members of the guild.

(vi) Advertisment of the cloth manufactured by the guild.

(vii) The realisation of the transitoriness of the world and its manifold possessions.

(viii) Reference to the reigning king Kumāragupta ruling over the earth.

(ix) Reference to the provincial governors Viśvavarman and his son Bandhuvarman.

(x) The eulogies of the two.

(xi) The erection of the sun temple by the guild of the weavers at the cost of a huge sum.

(xii) The appreciation of the temple.

(xiii) The description of the season (*hemanta*=winter) when the temple was erected.

(xiv) The era (Mālava), the year (493), season (*sevyaghana-stane*=winter), month *(sahasya=pauṣa)*, fortnight (bright) and the date (thirteenth).

(xv) The consecration of the temple through proper ceremonies *(mangalāchāra-vidhinā)*.

(xvi) The delapidation of one portion of the temple.

(xvii) The restoration of the temple.

(xviii) The description of the restored temple.

(xix) The year, the month, the fortnight and the date of restoration.

(xx) The description of the season (*vasanta*=spring) of restoration.

(xxi) The beautification of the town by the temple.

(xxii) The wish for the long life of the temple.

(xxiii) The composition of the document by Vatsabhatti.

(xxiv) Wishing auspiciousness to the engraver, the writer and the reader.

(xxv) The auspicious formula '*Siddhirastu*'.

There is a very large number of dedicatory inscriptions discovered from the different parts of the country. The most of them follow the style set up by the above detailed inscription. Some of them, however, contain more detailed genealogy and political achievements of the reigning sovereigns, verging on almost eulogy. The best specimens of the latter variety are the Bhitari Pillar Inscription of Skandagupta[1] and the Aihole Inscription of the time of Pulikeśin II[2].

(7) *Donative.* The largest number of incriptions belong to this type. The performance of sacrifices *(iṣta=yajna)* and the distribution of charity *(pūrta)* were regarded essential for a householder in ancient India. Hence rulers and subjects all vied with one another in giving donations and in recording them, if they were of permanent nature. On the basis of objects donated the inscriptions of this type can be classified under the following heads :

(a) Inscriptions recording the donation of caves or any of its parts for residential and other purposes of monks and ascetics.

(i) Excavation of full caves which were called *kubhā* = *(guhā)*, *lena* (= *layana*)and *selaghara* (= *śailagṛha*). The earliest specimens of cave-donating inscriptions are those of Aśoka found in Barabar Hills of Bihar. The first of them reads as follows :

"The Banyan Cave was given to the *Ājivikas* by king *Priyadarśi* when he had been anointed twelve years[3]".

[1] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 53ff.

[2] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VI, p. 1ff.

[3] लाजिना पियदसिना दुवाडसवसाभिसितेना ।
इयं निगोहकुहा दिना आजीविकेहि ॥ Hultzsch, *C.I.I.* Vol. I.

It is a very simple document recording the mere fact of donation. The Nagarjuni Cave Inscriptions of *Daśaratha*, the grand-son of Aśoka, are a bit bigger and contain some additional elements of donative inscriptions :

> "*Vāhiyaka* caves were formally donated by *Daśaratha*, the Beloved of gods, after he was consecrated to the throne, to the respectable *Ājīvikas* for residence to last as long as the moon and the sun[1]".

The Western Deccan is very rich in cave-donative inscriptions belonging to the *Kṣaharāta* and the *Āndhra-Sātavāhana* dynasties. The caves at the Udayagiri and the Khandagiri in Orissa and at Ajanta and Elora near Aurangabad have also preserved donative inscriptions of different varieties and dimensions dealing with :

(ii) Excavation of two or mor residential cells called *bigabha* (two-celled), *chatugabha* (four-celled), *panchagabha* (five-celled) etc[2].

(iii) Donations of *Chaitya*-caves or worship-halls known as *Chetıya-ghara*, *chaitya*, *chetia-kothi* etc[3].

(iv) Donations of assembly-halls *(meṭapas = maṇḍapas)*, dining-halls *(bhojana-śālās* or *bhojana-maṭapas)*, reception halls *(Upathāna = upasthāna-śālās)*etc[4].

(v) Donations of water-eisterns, tanks, wells etc. called *pāniyaka*, *pāniya-bhājana*, *vāpi*, *taḍāka* etc[5].

(vi) Donations of the frontages of caves *(ghara-mukha*, *gabhadāra* etc.*)*[6]

1 वहियका कुभा दषलथेन देवानं पियेना आनंतलियं अभिषितेना आजीविकेहि भदतेहि वाषनिषिदियाये निषिठे आचंदमषूलियं । Hultzsch, *C.I.I.*, Vol. . p.

2 Lūders, H. '*A List of Brāhmi Ins. otc.*' in *Ep. Ind.* Vol. X, Nos. 998, 1127.

3 Ibid. Nos. 1058, 1068, 1070, 1072, 1140, 1153, etc.

4 Ibid. Nos. 988, 1000, 1174, 1181, 1182 etc.

5 Ibid. Nos. 968-1180.

6 Ibid. Nos. 1090, 1092, 1156, 1197.

(vii) Donations of paths or passages called *chakama-patha.*[1]

(viii) Donations of stupas in the form of memorials.[2]

(ix) Donations of images *(bhagavat-pratimā)*,[3] figures of elephants *(hathin)*, *Yaksa (Yakha)*,[4] stone-benches and seats *(āsana, pedhika)*, rail *(veikā, veyikā)* etc.[5]

(*b*) *Inscriptions recording monetary donations* either to meet the entire or partial cost of some religious or pious construction or in the form of permanent endowments *(akṣaya-nīvi)* for various purposes, maintaining monks, feasting Brāhmaṇas or feeding the needy etc. Of the first variety a large number of inscriptions are found in the Western Ghats. The typical specimen of the second variety is the Mathura Inscription of the time of Huviṣka:

> "Accomplished (symbol). In the year 28, month Gurpiya (=Gorpaios=*Bhādrapada*), date 1, this meritorious rest-house was given a permanent endowment by *Prāchīnika*, the son of *Sarukaman*, the lord of *Kharāsalera* and *Vakana*. Out of the interest (on the deposit), every month, on the fourteenth day of the bright fort-night, one hundred Brāhmaṇas should be entertained in the rest-house. Every day at the gate of the rest-house should be kept three *āḍhakas* of the powdered fried corn (sathu), one *prastha* of salt, one *prastha* of chatani, three water-jars and five earthen cups. These should be given to orphans, the hungry and the thirsty. Merits arising from it will go to *Devaputa* (the son of gods) *Sāhi Huviṣka*, to those persons who love him and to the entire

[1] Ibid. Nos. 998, 1032, 1033, 1072.
[2] Ibid. 993-1110.
[3] Ibid. 1042-71.
[4] Ibid. 1089, 1143.
[5] Ibid. 985, 1143.

earth. The permanent endowment was deposited with two *śreṇis* (guilds) 550 *purāṇas* (coins) each".[1]

(c) *Inscriptions recording donations of miscellaneous objects.* The most important example of this type is the Nasika Inscription of Uṣavadāta which runs : "By Uṣavadāta, the son of *Dinik*, the son-in-law of *Kṣatrapa* Nahapāna, the *Ksaharāta* king, the giver of three hundread-thousand cows, the maker of gold-gifts and *tirthas* on the river *Barnāsā*, the giver of sixteen villages to the gods and *Brāhmaṇas*, the feaster of one hundred-thousand *Brahmaṇas* every year, the presenter of eight wives to *Brahmaṇas* at the meritorious *tirtha* of Prabhāsa, the giver of the shelter of quardangular rest-houses at Bharukachha, Daśapura, Govardhana and Śorparaga, the planter of gardens, and the constructor of tanks and wells, the establisher of free ferries by boats on the rivers Ibā, Pārada, Damaṇa, Tāpi, Karabeṇā and Dahamikā, the erector on both banks of these rivers assembly-halls and water-reservior for gratuitous distribution of water, and the giver of thirty two thousand roots of cocoanut trees at the village of Nanaṁgolā to the congregation of *Charakas*........."[2].

[1] 1. सिद्ध ७।। सवत्सरे २०+८ गुर्पिये दिवसे १ अयं पुण्य—
2. शाला प्राचीनीकन सरुकमानपुत्रेण खरासले
3. र-पतिन वकनपतिना अक्षय-नीवि दिन्ना । तुतो वृद्धि—
4. तो मासानुसासं शुद्धस्य चतुदिशि पुण्यशाला—
5. यं ब्राह्मणशतं परिविषितव्यं । दिवसे दिवसे
6. च पुण्यशालाये द्वारमुले धारिये साद्य-सक्तना आ—
7. ढका ३ लवृण—प्रस्थो १ शक्त-प्रस्थो १ हरित—कलापक—
8. घटका ३ मल्लका ५ । एतं अनाधानां कृतेन दातव्य
9. बभक्षितन पिवसितनं । य चत्र पुव्य तं देव पुत्रस्य
10. षाहिस्य हुविष्कस्य । येषा च देवपुत्रो प्रियः तेषामिदि पुण्य
11. भवतु सर्वायि च पृथिवीये पुण्य भवतु । अक्षयनिवि दिन्ना
12. ...[र]ाक-श्रेणीये पुराण शत ५००+५० समितकर-श्रेणी—
13. ये च पुराण शत ५००+५०।।

Ep. Ind. Vol. XX*I*, p. 60 ff.

[2] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. VIII, p. 78 ff.

(*d*) *Inscriptions recording donations of lands and villages.* The specimens of this type are rare among early inscriptions. From the late Gupta period and onwards a large number of inscriptions are concerned with the donations of fields and villages to monasteries and the *Brāhmaṇas.* The earliest instance of the type is found in Nasik Inscription of Vāsiṣṭhiputra Pulumāvi appended to that of Gautami Balaśri, which runs as follows :

"......the lord of *Daksināpatha*, desirous of serving and doing dear to the great queen, makes the gift of the village *Pisājipadaka*, situated on the lower-south slopes of the mountain *Triraśmi*, with all taxes accruing to it, for the comforts and prosperity of this cave-dwelling, leading to the propitiation of the Fathers and constructing, as if, a bridge of piety (for crossing the ocean of mortality)".[1]

The full-fledged specimens of this type are the copper-plates, called *sāsanas.* Some of the most important of them are :

(i) The Paharpur Copper-plate Inscription of the G.E. 159=479 A.D.[2]

(ii) The Damodarpur Copper-plate Inscription of the time of......Gupta, dated G.E. 224=543 A.D.[3]

(iii) The Khoh Copper-plate Inscription of Śarvanātha, G.E. 193=513 A.D.[4]

(iv) The Poona Copper-plate Inscription of Prabhāvati-Guptā.[5]

(v) Hirahadagalli Copper-plate Inscription of Śiva-skanda-varman.[6]

[1] एसत लेणस चितण निमित्त महादेवीय अयकाय सेवाकामो पियकामो च णता······ दक्षिणापथेसरो पितुपतियो धमसेतुस ददाति ग्रामं तिरण्हु पवतस अपर-दक्षिण-पसे पिसाजिपदक सबजातभोगनिरठि । *Ep. Ind.* VolI VII, p. 60

[2] *Ep. Ind.* Vol, XX, p. 61ff.

[3] *Ebid* Vol. XV, p. 142ff.

[4] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 126ff.

[5] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XV, p. 41ff.

[6] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. I, p. 5ff.

(vi) Penukoṇḍa Copper-plate Inscription of Mādhava.[1]

(vii) The Banskhera Copper-plate Inscription of Harṣa, dated regnal year 22=628 A.D.[2]

(viii) The Ragim Copper-plate Inscription of Tīvaradeva, dated regnal year 7 (=the last quarter of the eighth century).[3]

(ix) The Copper-plate Inscriptions of the *Vākāṭaka* dynasty.[4]

(x) The Copper-plate Inscriptions of the *Chālukyas* of Badami.[5]

(xi) The Copper-plate Inscriptions of the *Rāṣṭrakuṭas* of Manyakhed and their successors.[6]

(xii) The Copper-plate Inscriptions of the Valabhi kings.[7]

(xiii) The donative inscriptions of the *Pratihāras*, the the *Gahaḍavālas*, the *Chedis* etc.

An analysis of the copper-plate inscriptions dealing with donations of land and villages reveal the following scheme with some modifications and changes in order of items contained therein :

(i) Seal with or without a legend (not found in all inscriptions).

(ii) Some auspicious word or *maṅgala*.

(iii) The name of the place from which the order was issued.

(iv) The genealogy of the king.

(v) The details of order *(Śāsana)* :

(a) the list of officers and other persons to whom the order was addressed,

(b) the object *(hetu)* of donation, e.g., merits accruig to the donor, his parents and ancestors and to the entire world,

[1] Ibid. Vol. XIV, p. 334ff.

[2] Ibid. Vol. IV, p. 208ff.

[3] Fleet, *C.I.I.* Vol. III, No. 81.

[4] *Basin Copper-plates*, *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XVI, p. 151ff.

[5] *Luder's List* Nos. 25, 30, 36, 41, 48, 71, 104, 106, 151, 152, 164, 173.

[6] *Kielhorn's List*, *Ep. Ind.* VII. Appendix.

[7] *Ind. Ant.* Vol. VI, p. 9.

(*c*) the names of donees with their parentage, *gotras*, *sākhās*, *pravaras* etc.,

(*d*) the administrative situation of fields and villages donated,

(*e*) their legal separation from government revenue areas,

(*f*) revenue accruing to the village,

(*g*) exemptions to be enjoyed by the village,

(*h*) punishment prescribed for the violation of donation,

(vi) The wish for the everlasting career of donation,

(vii) Benedictory formula,

(viii) Laudatory formula,

(xi) Imprecatory formula,

(x) The details of date on which the *Śāsana* was executed,

(xi) The name of the *dutaka* or the representative of the king,

(xii) The name of the officer responsible for the preparation of the document, generally *sāndhi-vigrahika*,

(xiii) The name of the engraver and

(xiv) The autograph (*svahasta*) of the king (not always found).

(8) *Commemorative*. The inscriptions of this type record the events--birth, any spectacular achievement or martyrdom—from the life of a saint or a hero. The earliest of this type is the Rummindei Inscription of Aśoka which runs as follows:

> "King *Priyadarśin*, Beloved of the gods, when he had been consecrated twenty years, came in the person and did worship. *Because here the Śakya sage, Buddha was born*, he caused a huge stone wall to be made and a stone pillar to be erected....[1]"

In this inscription the birth and the birth-place of Lord Buddha are commemorated. The record, however, as much commemorates the visit of the emperor Aśoka to the site of the

[1] देवान पियेन पिय दसिन लाजिन वीसतिवसाभिसितेन
अतन आगाच महीयिते । हित वुध जाते सक्य मुनिति
सिला विगडभीचा कालापित सिलाथभे च उसपापिते । Hultzsch *C.I.I.* Vol. I.

Lumbini Garden. Another Inscription of the time of Bhānugupta, dated G.E. 191 (=510 A.D.) which records the martyrdom of Goparāja in a battle-field and the burning of his wife *(sati)* on the funeral pier of her husband. Its English rendering is :

> ["An auspicious symbol representing the formula 'Siddhaṁ' (accomplished)]. In the year one hundred followed by ninetyone on the seventh day of the dark fortnight of the months of *Srāvaṇa.* Year 100 90 1, the first day of the dark fortnight of *Śravaṇa*...... born from the pure family...... famous as a king. His son of great valour, by name Rājā Mādhava. His son became Goparāja, prosperous and of famous prowess. He was the daughter's son of Śarabharāja and became crest-jewel of his family. Śri Bhānugupta, (the reigning) king, was a famous hero in the world and as greatly valorous as Pārtha (Arjuna). With him Goparāja came here, following in accordance with the rules of freindship. After having fought a greatly brilliant battle he attained to the heaven, resembling Indra. His wife was devoted, attached, dear and beautiful. Following her husband, she mounted the heap of fire (funeral pyre), e.g., she became a suttee.[1]"

There is a large number of commemorative records belonging to the Silāhāras of Kolhapur and the *Chālukyas* of *Kalyāṇa* and there are a few belonging to the *Raṣṭrakuṭas*, the *Yādavas* and the Śilāhāras of Konkan. These records are written in prose and they are generally very short. But there are inscriptions of this type coming from Kolhapur and *Karṇāṭaka* which are composed in verse and contain hyperbolic eulogies of the

[1] श्रीभानुगुप्तो जगति प्रवीरो
राजा महान्पार्थं समोऽतिशूरः ।
तेनाथ सार्द्धन्त्विह गोपराजो
मित्रानुगत्येन किलानुयातः ।।३।।
कृत्वा च युद्धं सुमहत्प्रकाशं
स्वर्ग्गं गतो दिव्यनरेन्द्रकल्पः ।
भक्तानुरक्ता च प्रिया च कान्ता
भार्य्याविलग्नानुगताग्निराशिम् ।।४।। *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XV, p. 142ff.

dead heroes.[1] The following is the analysis of a typical commemorative inscription :

(i) The date of the inscription with its details.
(ii) The genealogy of the hero commemorated.
(iii) The eulogies of the hero and his ancestors.
(iv) The reference to the reigning sovereign.
(v) The achievments of the hero.
(vi) Events commemorated—births, deaths etc.

(9) *Literary.* Some inscriptions of ancient India record pieces of poetic compositions[2] and dramatic works and their purpose is purely literary. We have, however, some instances of religious literature also engraved for religious purposes. For example, from the Mahanirvāṇa stupa at Kusinagara (Deoria district of U.P.) was discovered a copper-plate, containing thirteen lines and recording the *Udāna-sutta of Buddha.*[3] The most important specimens of dramatic works engraved on stones are found at Ajmer in the mosque known as Adhai Dinka Jhopra. One of the inscriptions consists of seventyfive lines of writing. It contains large portions of the drama *Lalitavigraharāja* composed by the *Mahākavi Somadeva* in honour of the *Chāhamāna* king *Vigraharāja* of Ajmer. Another inscription consists of eightyone lines of writing and contains portions of the drama *Harakeli-nāṭaka* composed by *Vigraharājadeva* of Ajmera (the same as the patron of *Somadeva).*[4]

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[1] Lūder's List Nos. 242, 248-251.

[2] The inscriptions of ancient India from the 2nd century A. D. to the 12th century A.D. Specially eulogies and some of the donative are written in *Kāvya* style and a few of them are actually called *kāvya.*

[2] एवं मया श्रुतम्–एकस्मिं समये भगवान श्रावस्त्यां विहरतिस्म जेतवने अनाथ-पिण्डदस्यारामे······। *Arch. Sur. Annual Report* 1906-07, p. 46.

[4] *Ind. Ant.* Vol. XX, p. 201ff.

CHAPTER IX

PALÆOGRAPHICAL FORMULÆ

The earliest records on stone and copper discovered in India were spontaneous and characterised by simplicity. They had no set phraseology, style, form and contents. In course of time, however, Indian Palæography developed certain formulæ which governed its form and contents. The formulæ so evolved were generally followed by writers and engravers. Literary, religious and legal requirements were responsible for this development. The most common formulæ are given below :

1. *Initiation.*

The Piprahwa Buddhist vase inscription,[1] the edicts of Aśoka,[2] the Sohgaura Copper-plate inscription[3] and even as late as the Besnagar *Garuḍa*-pillar[4] inscriptions of the time of the *Suṅga* king Bhāgabhadra do not contain an initiatory or any opening formula. They start directly with their contents. Some auspicious symbols, *Svastika*, *Baddhamaṅgala* and Taurus appear for the first time in the Nasik Cave inscription of the time of Kṛṣṇa,[5] the *Sātavāhana* king and in the Hathigumpha inscription of Khāravela,[6] belonging to the last quarter of the first century B.C. and the beginning of the first century A.D. They are placed, in the latter document, at the very beginning and they may be regarded to represent some kind of opening formula. The opening formula proper, consisting of a word [*siddhaṁ* (Prakrit) = *siddhaṁ* (Sanskrit) = accomplished] makes its first appearance in the inscriptions of the *Sātavāhānas* and

[1] *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXXVI, p. 117ff.

[2] Hultzsch, *C.I.I.*, Vol. III.

[3] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XII, p. 2.

[4] *Arch. Sur. Ind. Annual Report*, 1908-1909, p. 126.

[5] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. VII, p. 93.

[6] Ibid. Vol. XX, p. 72 f.

the *Kṣaharātas* found at Junnar,[1] Mahad,[2] Kud,[3] Karle,[4] Shelarwadi,[5] and Nasik.[6] Stein was rightly of the opinion that the original home of this formula was the cave-area of *Mahārāṣtra* and its development was associated with the evolution of the official style in the *Sātavāhana* inscriptions.[7] The use of this formula spread from *Mahārāṣtra* and *Āndhra* during the first three centuries A.D. Even the foreign powers like the *Kuṣaṇas* and the *W. Kṣatrapas* adopted this auspicious formula which was believed to ensure success and perfection. Mathura became a good centre of this formula and the *Guptas* found and adopted it here. With the expansion of the Gupta empire the currency of, '*siddhaṁ*', extended over the North and the East of India. A new development in the use of this formula originated at Mathura: The word '*siddhaṁ*' had an equivalent symbol ❍ and both the word and the symbol were used together.[8] Elsewhere they were used either together or optionally. The *Vākāṭaka* records offer another variety of this formula. The Basim grant[9] has '*Dṛṣta-siddhaṁ*', the second part of the formula put below the first in the upper left corner of the First Plate. Regarding the significance of the words '*Dṛṣtaṁ*' Fleet was of the opinion that it was an abbreviation of '*Dṛṣtaṁ Bhagavatā*' [= seen by Lord (= God)]. The use of the phrase '*Jitaṁ Bhagavatā*' [= conquered by Lord (= God)] just after '*Dṛṣtaṁ-Siddhaṁ*' renders the suggestion of Fleet untenable.[10] The possible meaning of the word '*Dṛṣtaṁ*' appears to be 'seen', implying the examination and sanction of the record. This formula ('*siddhaṁ*') became so respectable and widely

[1] *Lūder's List* No. 1172

[2] Ibid. No. 1072.

[3] Ibid. Nos. 1040, 1041.

[4] Ibid. No. 408.

[5] Ibid. No. 1121.

[6] Ibid. Nos. 1127, 1137-1140, 1148, 1149.

[7] *Indian Historical Quarterly*, IX, 225-226.

[8] *Mathura Stone Inscription of the time of Huviṣka*, *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XXI, p. 60 f.

[9] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XXVI, 151; *Pallava records*, *Ep. Ind.* VI, 86 ff; Ibid. I, 5ff.

[10] *Poona Copper-plates*, *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XV, 41; *Rithpur Copper-plates*, *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XIX, p. 267.

current that it still survives in the orthodox style of even private letters addressed to a superior.

Another opening formula, which developed later but became equally popular, was '*Svasti*' (auspiciousness) or '*Oṁ Svasti*' (the mystic formula 'Oṁ,' symbolising the Ultimate Reality preceding '*Svasti*' or auspiciousness). Some of the earliest instance of the use of '*Svasti*' are found in the Baigram Copper-plate Inscription (G.E.,) 128=448 A.D.[1] the Paharpur Copper-plate Inscription(G.E., 159=479 A.D.[2]) and the Gunaighar Copper-plate Inscription[3] of Vaiṇyagupta. Later records of Harṣavardhana, the Banskhera Copper-plate[4] and the Madhuban Copper-plate[5] also start with the formula. When we pass on to the Deccan and the South the inscriptions of the *Vākāṭakas*,[6] the *Traikuṭakas*,[7] the *Kaṭachchuris*,[8] the *Pallavas*,[9] and the *Gaṅgas*,[10] belonging to the period between the fifth and the seventh centuries A.D. open with the formula '*Oṁ Svasti*' or mere '*Svasti*', 'Oṁ' being mrstly represented by the sign 'ॐ'.

In the early mediaeval period of Indian history the following opening formulæ were generally used :

(i) *Oṁ*[11]
(ii) *Oṁ Svasti*[12]
(iii) *Svasti*[13]
(iv) *Svasti Śrimān*[14]

[1] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XXI, p, 81f,
[2] Ibid. Vol. XX, p. 61ff.
[3] *Ind. Hist. Quart.* Vol, VI, p. 53f.
[4] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. IV, p. 208.
[5] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. I, p: 72.
[6] Ibid., XIX, 267.
[7] Ibid. X, 51.
[8] Ibid. IX, 296 ; XII, 30,
[9] Ibid. XV, 254ff.
[10] Ibid. XIV, p. 334ff.
[11] *Luder's List*, 98, 99. 100, 109.
[12] Ibid. 11, 31, 39, 92.
[13] Ibid. 7, 10, 12, 25, 28, 32, 36.
[14] Ibid. 7, 10, 28, 32.

(v) *Svasti Jayatyāviṣkṛataṁ*[1]
(vi) *Oṁ Svāmi-mahāsena*[2]
(vii) *Oṁ Svasti Amarasaṁkāśa*[3]
(viii) *Oṁ Svasti Jayatyāviṣkṛtaṁ*[4]
(ix) *Svasti Jayatyamala*[5]
(x) *Oṁ Śri Svami-mahāsena*[6]
(xi) *Oṁ Jayaschābhudayośćha*[7]
(xii) *Svaśti Śri Jayabhyudayaśćha*[8]
(xiii) *Oṁ Svasti Jayabhyudayaśćha*[9]
(xiv) *Oṁ Namah Śivāya or Oṁ Namaśśivāya*[10]
(xv) *Śri Oṁ Namaḥ Śivāya*[11]
(xvi) *Śri Oṁ Namah Śivabhyāṁ*[12]
(xvii) *Oṁ Oṁ Namo Vināyakāya*[13]
(xviii) *Oṁ Namo Varāhāya*[14]
(xix) *Oṁ Sri Ādi-vārāhāya Namaḥ*[15]
(xx) *Oṁ Namo Devarāja Devāya*[16]
(xxi) *Oṁ Namaḥ Sarvajñāya*[17]

2. *Invocatian.*

Just after the opening formula in an epigraph invocations were addressed to God, deities, *Tirthaṅkaras*, *Buddhas*, *Arhatas*, *Siddhas*, saints etc. in order to seek their presence as a witness

[1] Ibid. 25, 36, 37, 38.
[2] Ibid. 11.
[3] Ibid. 31.
[4] Ibid. 39.
[5] Ibid. 12.
[6] *Kar. Ins.* No. 1.
[7] *Lūder's List* No. 200.
[8] Ibid. No. 310, 349.
[9] Ibid. No. 260.
[10] Ibid. 333, 334.
[11] Ibid. 278.
[12] Ibid. 308.
[13] Ibid. 198, 359.
[14] Ibid. 339.
[15] Ibid. 368.
[16] Ibid. 279.
[17] Ibid. 257.

to the deeds executed in the records and to pray for their help and blessings for the successful completion of the undertakings. This practice was, however, not current in the beginnings, unless we suppose that certain words, with which the inscriptions started, implied a sort of invocation for instance, *Sukrīti*=(*Buddha*) in the Piprahwa Vase inscription, *Devānaṁpriya* in the Aśokan edicts and *Devadeva* (the Lord of gods=God) in the Besnagar *Garuḍa-pillar* inscription. With the development of the cults of devotion and the bifurcation of various religious sects—Jain, Buddhist, *Bhāgavata*, *Vaiṣṇava*, *Śaiva*, *Śākta* etc.—the practice of invocation in inscriptions became more and more common and established.

The earliest invocation proper occurs in the Hathigumpha cave inscription of Khāravela[1] in the following simple form: *Namo arhantānaṁ* (salutation to the *Arhatas*) and *namo savasiddhānaṁ* (salutation to all the *siddhas*). The Nānāghat Cave inscription of Nāganikā.[2] contain invocation to a number of deities *Dharma*, *Indra*, *Saṁkarṣaṇa*, *Vāsudeva*, *Chandra*, *Sūrya*, those endowed with greatness (*mahimāvatānaṁ*), the Protectors of the worlds (*Lokapālas*), *Yama*, *Varuṇa*, *Kubera* and *Vāsava*. In the Śaka and the Kuṣaṇa inscriptions invocations are very rare. One solitary instance is found in the Mathura Votive Tablet of the time of Śoḍāṣa of the year 72 (era uncertain), which runs as '*Nama arhato vardhamānasa*' (salutation to *arhat* Vardhamāna=Mahāvīra).[3] The Nāgārjunikoṇḍa inscriptions of Virapuruṣadatta,[4] discovered in the Guntūr district of the Madras Presidency and assigned to the later half of the 3rd century A.D., contain the following invocations to the Lord Buddha:

(i) "Salutation to the Lord (Buddha), worshipped by Indra, completely enlightened; omniscient, compassionate towards all living creatures, the conqueror of all attachments, defects and allurements, the Chief

[1] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XX, p. 72 ff.
[2] *Arch. Sur. West Ind.* Vol. V, p. 60 ff.
[3] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. II, p. 199.
[4] Ibid. XX, p. 16, 19 f.

among all Teachers, Perfect Buddha, and one who has attained *Nirvāṇa*".[1]

(ii) "Salutation to the Lord (Buddha), born in the family of *Ikṣvakurāja*, capable of producing hundred of seers, the Guide of the happiness and welfare of gods, human beings and all living creatures, the conqueror of desire, anger, fear, pleasure and hunger of the objects of the world, the suppressor of the power and pride of haughty Cupid, greatly powerful, the Promulgator of the Eight-fold Path and the Mover of the Wheel of Religion, whose feet is decorated with all the good signs of great men , having glory like the mid-day sun , having pleasant audience like the moon of the autumn season and worshipped in the hearts of all living creatures".[2]

A few of the inscriptions have shorter invocations like '*Namo Bhagavato Budhasa*' (Salutation to the Lord Buddha) and, '*Namo Bhagavato Sama-Sambudhasa*' (salutation to the Lord Buddha, Perfectly Enlightened).[3]

The early Gupta inscriptions up to the time of Chandra-gupta II Vikramāditya do not record invocations to any deity. The Mandasor Stone Inscription of the time of Kumaragupta II (Mālava Era 493 and 529 = A.D. 436 and 473) contains a long and glowing invocation to the Sun, running into three stanzas. The first stanza runs as follows :

"May the Sun, the cause of the origin and destruction of the world, protect you—who is worshipped by the hosts of gods for the sake of their maintenance and by the *Siddhas* who wish for higher accomplishments (and)

[1] नमो भगवतो देवराज-सकतस सुपबुधबोधिनो सवंञुनो सवसतानुकंपस जितरागदोस मोहविपमुतस महागणिवसभ गंधहथिस संमसंबुधस धातुवरपरिगहितस ।
ibid No. 1.

[2] नमः भगवतो इखाकराज पवररिसिसतपभव-वंस-संभवस देवमनुस-सव-सत-हित-सुख-मग देसिकस जितकाम कोधभयहरिस तरिस मोह दोसस दपित मारबलदप-मानप-समन-करस दसबलमहाबलस अठगमगधमचकपवतकस चक लखण सुकुमार सुजातचरणस तरुणदिवसकरपभस सरदसरिससोम दरिसनस सबलोकचित महितस बुधस । ibid No. 3.

[3] Ibid.

by having the objects of their desire under their control as they long for liberation and by sages practising with devotion strict penances, who are able to curse or to offer blessings".[1]

The Junagadh Rock Inscription of Skandgupta opens with an invocation to *Viṣṇu* as follows:

"That *Viṣṇu*, the Great Conqueror, the Remover of Afflictions, becomes victorious, who for the sake of the happiness of gods took away the prosperity of Bali, capable of full and everlasting enjoyment, and who is the perpetual abode of the goddess Lakṣmi resting on the louts flower".[2]

The Indor Copper-plate Inscription of Skandgupta[3] invokes *Bhāskara* (the Sun), the Eraṇ Stone-pillar Inscription of Buddhagupta[4] *Garuḍa-ketu (Viṣṇu)*, the Khoh Copper-plate Inscription of Saṁkṣobha[5] *Vāsudeva (Kṛsna)* and the Ajanta Cave Inscription of Hariṣeṇa *Buddha*.[6] The Mandasor Stone Inscription of Yasodharman (Mālava Era 589 = A.D. 532)[7] and the Mandasor Stone-pillar Inscription[8] of the same knig offer invocations to *Śiva* (as *Pinākī* = Archer and *Śūlapāni* = bearing a trident in his hand). The first of these inscriptions devotes three stanzas in the invocation to *Śiva*. The first stanza stands as:

"Victorious is he, (the god) *Pinākin*, the Lord of all the worlds, the splendour of whose teeth (displayed) in

[1] यो वृत्यर्थमुपास्यते सुरगणैस्सिद्धैश्च सिद्धयर्त्थिभि–
ध्यनैकाग्रपरै विधेयविषयै र्मोक्षार्त्थिभिर्य्योगिभिः ।
भक्त्या तीव्रतपोधनैश्च मुनिभिश्शापप्रसादक्षमै–
र्हेतुर्य्यो जगत × क्षयाभ्युदययो॒पायत्सवो भास्करः ॥
Fleet : *C. I. I.* Vol. III, p. 81 ff.

[2] श्रियमभिमतभोग्यां नैककालापनीतां त्रिदशपतिसुखार्त्थं यो बलेराजहार ।
कमलनिलयनायाः शाश्वतं धाम लक्ष्म्याः स जयति विजितार्ति विष्णुरत्यन्त जिष्णुः।।
Fleet : *C. I. I.*, Vol. III, p. 58 ff.

[3] *Ind. Ant.* Vol. p. XVIII, p. 219.
[4] Fleet : *C. I. I.*, Vol. III, p. 89.
[5] Ibid., p. 114 ff.
[6] *Indian Culture*, VII, p. 372 ff.
[7] Fleet : *C. I. I.* Vol. III, p. 152 ff.
[8] Ibid. p. 146 ff.

smiles, talks and songs, and resembling the lustre of lightning, sparkling in the night, envelopes and brings into full view (all) this universe".[1]

In the subsequent records, both official and private, specially eulogistic and dedicatory, invocations became a regular feature and they were offered to *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva*, *Brahmā*, and other gods to their various manifestations and to their consorts under their different forms. The Buddhist records invoke Lord Buddha[2] and sometimes Buddhist goddess like *Ārya-Vasudhārā*.[3] The Jain inscriptions, which are more numerous than the Buddhist ones, invoke one of the *Tīrthaṅkaras*, some Jaina saints or the Jain creed.[4]

3. *Benediction.*

Benediction is an utterance of blessings or good wishes for the merits and happiness of the person responsible for a record or for the safety and longevity of his deeds, which indirectly blessed him or for the welfare of the world in general. In early inscriptions there are no regular benediction, as these records are mostly Buddhist and early pure ethical Buddhism inspired action without any idea of a reward. Yet some germs of benediction can be traced in the edicts of Aśoka :

"For this purpose, namely, that (my descendants, may enjoin the growth of this matter and that no diminution should be noticed, has this *Dhaṁma-lipi* been caused to be written".[5]

"For this purpose this document of *Dhaṁma* has been engraved, namely, that it may long endure and that my progeny may follow me".[6]

[1] स जयति जगतां पतिः पिनाकी स्मितरव-गीतिषु यस्य दन्तकान्तिः ।
घुतिरिव तडितां निशि स्फुरन्ती तिरयति च स्फुटयत्यदश्च विश्वम् ॥
Ibid., 152 ff.

[2] *The Nalanda Ins. of Yaśovarmadeva*, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XX.

[3] *The Sarnath Ins. of Kumaradevī*, *Ep. Ind.* Vol. IX, p. 319 ff.

[4] *Luder's List*, No. 235, 237, 239, 340, etc.

[5] एताय अथाय इदं लेखापितं इमस अथसं वधि युजन्तु हीनि च नो लोचेतव्या ।
Aśokau R. *E.* IV.

[6] एतये अध्रये अयि ध्रम-दिपि लिखित चिरठितिक होतु तथ च मे प्रज अनुवटतु
Aśokan R. *E.* V.

"But if it achieves that object, both are here gained, to wit, that object of this world and the begetting of endless merit in the next through that *Dhaṁma-maṅgala*".[1]

"May all (their) strong attachment be attachment to exertion. That is good for this world and the next".[2]

"For my desire is that even during the time of imprisonment, they may try to win the bliss of the next world and that manifold pious practices, self-restraint and liberality may grow among the people.[3]

When we pass on to the early centuries of the Christian era, when the cults of devotion—*Vaiṣṇava* and *Mahāyāna*—were developing, and the Puranic religion was just raising its head, benedictions became more and more pronounced. The Panjtar Stone Inscription of a *Kuṣaṇa* king, recording the construction of a *Śiva*-temple, expresses the wish, "May this *Śiva*-temple become meritorious and eternal".[4] The Taxila Silver Scroll Inscription of another *Kuṣaṇa* king, recording the construction of a stupa, expresses the wish that it may lead to 'the health of the king; the worship of all the Buddhas, every Buddha, all living creatures, parents, friends, kith-and-kins and for his own health and final beatitude *(nirvāṇa)*'.[5] The Sarnath Buddhist Image Inscription of Kaniṣka records the wish that the image may be for 'the happiness and welfare of all living creatures'.[6] The Mathura Stone Inscription of the time of Huviṣka, recroding a permanent endowment *(akṣaya-nīvi)* wishes, "Whatever merits may accrue from this donation should go to *Devaputra* (the son of gods) *Sāhi* Huviṣka (and) to those to whom *Devaputra* is dear and should lead to the merits of the entire earth".[7] It should be observed

[1] हिद च से अथ्े परत्र च अनंतं पुणं प्रसवति तेन ध्रम-मंगलेन ।। R. E. IX.

[2] सब चतिरति भोतु य ध्रमरति । स हि हिदलोकिक परलोकिक । R. E. XIII.

[3] इछा हि मे हेवं निलुधसि पि कालसि पालतं आलाधयेवूति । जनस च बढति विविधे धंम-चलने संयमे दान-सविभागेति । *Aśokan P.E.* IV.

[4] पञकरे णव अमत शिवथल रम……। *Ep. Ind.* XIV, p. 134.

[5] *Ep. Ind.* XIV, p. 265.

[6] सर्वसत्वानां हितसुखार्थम् *Ep. Ind.* VIII, p. 173 ff.

[7] य चत्र पुण्य देव पुत्रस्य षाहिस्य हुविष्कस्य । येषां च देवपुत्रो प्रियः तेषामपि पुण्य भवतु । सर्वायि च पृथिवीये पुण्य भवतु । *Ep. Ind.* XXI p. 60,

that these benedictions are rudimentary and not full-fledged. So is the case with the inscriptions of the *Sātavāhanas*,[1] the *Śakas* of *Mahārāṣṭra*[2] and Ujjayini[3] and the *Ikṣvākus* of the *Kṛṣna*- Guntur region[4].

It is with the Guptas that the long and full-fledged benedictions start and they reach their climax in the records of the early mediaeval period of Indian history. The first Gupta record, the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta, contains the following benediction, though indirect and mixed with eulogy :

> "Whose glory, which rises up in layers one above the other through the manifestation of his generosity, power of the arms and self-control, and his proficiency in the precepts of the scriptures and which spreads in more than one way, purifies the three worlds like white waters of the Gaṅgā, which flows in higher and higher floods, follows more than one path and dashes forth rapidly by reason of being liberated from confinement in the cave in the form of the interior of the matted hair of (the god) *Paśupati (Śiva)*".[4]

In the closing part of the inscription we also find the earlier short formula of benediction : "May this poetic composition ......be for the happiness and welfare of all living creatures".[5] The Mandasor Inscription of Kumāragupta II and Bandhuvarman (Mālava Era 493 and 529=A.D. 463 and 473) contains a full stanza of pure benediction :

> "As long as (the god) *Iśa* wears a mess of tawny matted locks, charming like the spotless rays of the moon (on his forehead) ; and (as long as) (the god) *Śārṅgin* (wears) a garland

[1] D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions. I*, pp. 183-204.

[2] Ibid. pp. 157-166.

[3] Ibid. pp. 167-182.

[4] प्रदान-भुज-विक्रम प्रशमशास्त्रवाक्योदयैरुपर्युपरिसञ्चयोच्छ्रितमनेकमार्गं यशः ।
पुनाति भुवनत्रयं पशुपतेर्जटान्तर्गुहानिरोधपरिमोक्षशीघ्रमिव पाण्डु गाङ्गं पयः ॥
Fleet : *C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 1.

[5] एतच्च काव्यं···सर्वभूत-हित-सुखायास्तु । ibid.

of lovely lotuses on his shoulders;—so long may this stately temple endure for ever".[1]

The Junagadh Inscription of Skandagupta contains other instances of typical benedictions:

"The celebrated lake Sudarśana ...... should last for an eternal time. Now may the lake with the edges washed by the *Chakravākas*, *Krauñchas*, and swans spreading their beauty along the edges of the very firmly-built dam ......with pure water ...... (last) on the earth till the sun and the moon".[2]

"And may the city also become prosperous; full of inhabitants; cleansed from sin by prayers (of *Brahman*) sung by many hundreds of *Brāhmaṇas*, (free from) drought and famine for a hundred years".[3]

The Gangdhar Stone Inscription of Viśvavarman (Mālava Era 480 = 423 A.D.)[4] and the Mandasor Stone Inscription of Yaśodharman alias Viṣṇuvardhana,[5] the Gwalior Stone Inscription of Mihirakula (c. 515-35 A.D.), the Ajanta Cave Inscription of the time of Hariṣeṇa (c. 6th century A.D.)[6] and the Talagunda Stone-Pillar Inscription of the time of Śāntivarman[7] possess similar benedictions for the durability and prosperity of the deeds executed by the donors.

The inscriptions belonging to the period between the seventh and twelvth centuries A.D. in northern India and between the seventh and the thirteenth in the Deccan and the South follow

[1] अमलिन-शशि-लेखा-दंतुरं पिङ्गलानां परिवहति समूहं यावदीशो जटानां ।
विकचकमलमालामंस-सक्तां च शार्ङ्गी भवनमिदमदारं शाश्वतन्तावदस्तु ॥
Fleet: *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 81 ff.

[2] सुदर्शनं शाश्वत-कल्पकालम् ।
अपि च सुदृढ़ सेतु-प्रान्त-विन्यस्त-शोभ-रथ चरणसमाह्व-क्रौंचहंसावधूतम् ।
विमल-सलिल·····················भुवित······ ······दानेऽर्क: शशी च ॥
ibid. p. 58 ff., Verses. 37-38

[3] नगरमपि च भूयादृद्धिमत्पौरजुष्टं द्विजवहुशतगीतं ब्रह्मनिर्नष्टपापं ।
शतमपि च समानांभीतिदुर्भिक्षमुक्तं······॥ ibid. Verse 39.

[4] Ibid. p. 74 ff.

[5] Ibid. p. 152 ff.

[6] *Indian Culture*, Vol. VII, p. 372 ff.

[7] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. VIII, p. 31 ff.

the *Gupta* and the *Vākataka* styles of benedictions in their respective regions. One thing deserves observation: Whereas the copper-plates, which are mostly land-grants, contain a short formula 'the grant lasting till the moon, the sun and the earth,[1] the stone inscriptions, which are generally eulogistic, dedicatory or donative, possess large benedictions for the donor and his donation or for the devotee and the object dedicated.[2] There are, however, some instances which show variations and exceptions also.

4. *Laudation.*

Laudatory formula contained the lauding or praise of the person responsible for the record or his deeds as an incentive for further good deeds. The germs of this formula can also be traced in the following edicts of Aśoka:

> "......Meritorious is the hearkening to mother and father; meritorious is liberality to friends, acquaintances and relatives, to Brāhmaṇas and Śramaṇas; meritorious is the abstention from slaughter of animals; meritorious is small expense and small accumulation".[3]
>
> "The rite, however, bears great fruit, which is *Dhaṁma-maṅgala*. There seemly behaviour towards the servile and menial classes and reverence towards preceptors is considered meritorious."[4]
>
> "And it has been said: 'gift is a meritorious thing'. But there is no gift or favour comparable to the gift or favour of *Dhaṁma*. Therefore, a friend, a sympathiser, or a companian ought to exhort (one another) in various things, saying: 'this is a duty, this is meritorious; with this it is possible to attain heaven'. And what thing is

[1] चन्द्रार्कक्षितिसमकालीनो । *The Banskhera Copper-plate Ins.* of Harṣa., *Ep. Ind.* Vol. IV, p. 208 ff;
आचन्द्रार्कक्षितिसमकालं यावत् । *The Naihatti grant of* Ballalasena, *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XIV, p. 159.

[2] Fleet: *C. I. I.* Vol. III, No. 42.

[3] साधु मातरि च पितरि च सूसूसा मिता संस्तुत-ञातीनं बाम्हणसमणानं साधु दानं प्राणानं साधु अनारंभो अपव्ययता अपभांडता साधु । R.E. III.

[4] R.E. IX.

more worthy of achievement through this than the attainment of heaven ?"[1]

"He, who does it in this manner, accomplishes the worldly life and obtains infinite spiritual merits through that gift of *Dhaṁma*."[2]

The Besnagar Garuḍa-pillar Inscription contains the following piece of laudation :

"*Dama* (self-control), *chāga* = *tyāga* (tenunciation) and *apramāda* (vigilance)—these are the three immortal steps and, if properly followed here, lead to the heaven."[3]

The above-quoted instances are the laudations of moral precepts or ethical virtues and they are simple and restrained. The *Āndhra*, the *Kṣaharāta*, the *Kṣattrapa* and the *Kuṣaṇa* inscriptions, which generally dealt with the excavation of caves for monks, the excavation or construction of *chaityas* (shrines) or stupas, the installation of images, the dedication of temples and the institution of permanent endowments, did not evoke, like previous records, high-flown laudations but a simple praise in the form of the following expressions and even that not invariably :

"This image of the Lord *Śākya-sage* was installed...... for the removal of all afflictions and for the happiness and welfare of all living creatures."[4]

"This stone staff has been erected for the attainment of happiness available in the heaven."[5]

[1] RE. IX (Girnar, Dhauli and Jaugada versions). The Kalsi, Shahbazgadhi and Mansera versions also contain the laudation of Dhamma.

[2] शे तथा कलंत हिदलोकिक्ये च कं आलधे होति पलत चा अनंतं पुणं पशवति तेना धंमदानेना । RE. XI. See also second separate RE. Jaugada version, PE. II. III. IV, VI, VII.

[3] त्रिनि अमुत-पदानि इअ सु अनुठितानि ।
नेयंति स्वगं दम चाग अप्रमाद *Arch. Sur. Ind. Annual Report*, 1908-09, p. 126.

[4] भगवतः शाक्यमुनेः प्रतिमा प्रतिष्ठापित ।····
सर्वदुःखोपशमाय सर्वसत्वहितसुखार्थं·· *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. X, p. 113 No. 6.

[5] इदंशान्यं···उत्थावित स्वर्गसुखार्थं । *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVI, p. 238.

"This pillar has been erected for the attainment of happiness and welfare in both the worlds, for securing the properties leading to one's own *nirvāṇa* and for ensuring the happiness and welfare of all living creatures."[1]

Laudation became regular, eloquent and prolonged with the advent of the copper-plate grants during the *Gupta-Vākāṭaka* period of Indian history, involving the transfer and the donation of landed property to the *Brāhmaṇas*, who were householders and not ascetics who accepted alms and donations with calm and indifference. The *Brāhmaṇa* donees, who maintained educational and religious establishments, were interested in getting more and more permanent endowments for their institutions offered more praise upon their donors and lauded their donations with all possible heavenly blessings for the donors and their ancestors to serve as an incentive for more profuse future donations. It is also specifically stated that the laudatory stanzas are meant for future rulers and jurists.[2] In the copper-plate grants laudatory stanzas are not individual expressions, but they consist of texts from the authentic *Smṛtis*.[3] A few of the instances are given below, which are repeated in every grant with some additions, omissions and variations:

"O Yudhiṣṭhira, protect the land-grant given to the twice-born by previous donors vigilantly. O best among the rulers of earth, it is better to protect the old grants than to give new ones. The earth has been given away by many and it will be given away repeatedly. The fruit of donation, if protected, will accrue to him, who will possess the earth."[4]

[1] उभयलोक-हितसुखावहथनाय च अतनो च निवाण-संपति-संपादके ।
सवलोकहित-सुखावहथनाय च इमं खभं पतिथपितं ति ॥ *Ep. Ind.*, XX, 16-19.

[2] तदुत्तरकालं सम्व्यवहारिभिः धर्म्ममवेक्ष्यानुमन्तव्याः । *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XV, p. 133f.

[3] Vide P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmasastra*, Vol II. 2. App. pp. 1271.

[4] पूर्वदत्तां द्विजातिभ्यो यत्नाद्रक्ष युधिष्ठिर ।
महीं महीवतां (मतां) श्रेष्ठ दानच्छ्रेयोऽनुपालनं (नम्) ॥
व (ब) हुभिर्व्वसुधा दत्ता दीयते च पुनः पुनः ।
यस्य यस्य यदा भूमिस्तस्य तस्य तदा फलम् ॥ ibid. Vol. XV, p. 133; p. 138f.

"The earth has been given away by numerous kings Sagara etc. The fruit of donation, if protected, will accure to him, who will possess the earth. The donor of land rejoices in the heaven for sixty-thousand years...."[1]

"......The manes cry and the grand-parents (in the nether-world) that some donor of land born in our family will redeem us."[2]

"Kings generally do not attain to the happy (end of life. (But) those, who donate land, are always respected."[3]

"There is no higher gift than the gift of land, and the protection of a gift is superior to a new gift. All kings Nṛga etc., having protected the (old) grants of land, attained to heaven."[4]

"There has been no gift equal to the gift of land nor there will be any gift equal to it."[5]

"To give away grant oneself is much easier; to protect the grant made by others is much more difficult. If there is a choice between making a fresh grant

[1] बहुभिर्वसुधा दत्ता राजभिस्सगरादिभिः ।
यस्य यस्य यदा भूमिस्तस्य तस्य तदा फ़लम् ॥
षष्टिवर्षसहस्राणि स्वर्गे मोदति भूमिदः । *Domodarpur Copper. plate ins.* (G.E. 224=543 A.D.), *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XII, p. 142f.

[2] आस्फोटयन्ति पितरः प्रबलगन्ति पितामहाः ।
भूमिदोऽस्मिन्कुले (अस्मत्कुले) जातः स नः संतारयिष्यति ॥ *Mallasārul Copper-plate inscription of Viiaya sena*, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIII, p. 159ff.

[3] प्रायण हि नरेन्द्राणां विद्यते न शुभा गतिः ।
पूज्यन्ते ते तु सततं प्रयच्छन्तो वसुन्धराम् ॥ The Khoh Ins. of *Sarvanātha* (G.E. 193=513 A.D.) Fleet *C.I.I.* III. p. 126ff.

[4] भूमिप्रदानान्न परं प्रदानं दानाद्विशिष्टं परिपालनञ्च ।
सर्वेऽतिसृष्टां परिपाल्य भूमिं नृपा नृगाद्यस्त्रिदिवं प्रपन्नाः ॥ *The Khoh Copper-plate Ins. of Samksobha* (G.E. 209=529 A.D.) Fleet *C.I.I.* Vol. III. p. 144ff.

[5] भूमिदानसमन्दानं न भूतं न भविष्यति । Narasraopet Copper-plate Inscription of Siṁhavarman discovered in the Guntur disttrict of Madras Presidency *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XV, p. 254ff.

> and the protection of an old one, the latter should be regarded superior to the former."[1]

A sporadic instance of the construction of a temple lauded in the strain of a land-grant is found in the Gwalior Stone Inscriptions of *Mihirakula* (c. 515-35 A.D.):

> "Those, who build this excellent temple of the Sun, having glory similar to that of the rays of the moon, will have their abode in the heaven up to the end of a *kalpa*."[2]

There is a welcome variation introduced in the Banskhera Copper-plate Inscription of Harṣavardhana (Harṣa Era 22 = 628 A.D.):

> "This gift should be assented to by those who follow the noble course of our family and also by others. Charity and the protection of the glory of others (is the) reward of the goddess of wealth, fickle like the lightning or the bubble in water. Men (lit. creatures) should do what is beneficial by action, by mind and by speech. This unequalled way of the acquisition of *Dharma* is related by Harṣa."[3]

The laudatory passages in the inscriptions of the subsequent period of Indian history lack in originality and get stereo-typed. The only variations found in them is in quantity, phraseology and sequence. Some of the inscriptions paraphrase laudatory stanzas in prose and abbreviate their contents. A few of them do away with laudatory stanzas altogether and are content with 'for the augmentation of the merits and fame

1 स्वन्दातुं सुमहच्छक्यं दुःखमन्यार्थपालनम् ।
दानं वा पालनं वेति दानाच्छ्रेयोऽनुपालनम् ।। *Penukenda Copper-plate Ins. of* Mādhava (Anompur dist. Madras). *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIV, p. 334ff.

2 ये कारयन्ति भानोश्चन्द्रांशुसमप्रभं गृहप्रवरम् ।
तेषां वासः स्वर्गे यावत्कल्पक्षयो भवति ।। Fleet. *C.I.I.* Vol. II. p. 162f.

3 अस्मत्कुलक्रममुदारमुदाहरद्भिरन्यैश्च दानमिदमभ्यनुमोदनीयम् ।
लक्ष्मयास्तडित-बुद्-बुद्-चञ्चलाया दानं फलं परयशः परिपालनं च ।।
कर्मणा मनसा वाचा कर्तव्यं प्राणिभिर्हितम् ।
हर्षेणैतत्समाख्यातं धर्मार्जनमनुत्तमम ।। *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, p. 208.

of the mother and the father and oneself and the grant lasting till the moon, the sun and the earth."[1]

5. *Imprecation.*

The literal meaning of 'imprecation' is to invoke or call down evil upon persons, deeds or objects. It was used as a deterrent against doing or committing an undesirable act oneself and against abbrogating or violating the good deeds done by others. The early moral, religious and dedicative inscriptions have no set imprecatory formula, though in their negative precepts they warn persons against doing something undesirable. Even donative inscriptions, up to the fourth century A.D., did not develop imprecatory formula, as the objects of donations were mostly cave-dwellings and the articles of daily use, which did not provake persons to interfere with donations. Yet, the rudiments of imprecation are found in some of the early inscriptions. The edicts of Aśoka, again, furnish a few instances of imprecations :

> "No animal should here be immolated and offered as a sacrifice; nor should any *samāja* be held-for king *Priyadarśin*, Beloved of the gods, sees much evil in a *samāja*."[2]
>
> ......and the fostering of the practice of *Dhaṁma* is not for a man devoid of virtuous conduct."[3]
>
> "But that is *parisrava* which is *apuṇya* (unrighteousness.)".[4]
>
> "But whosoever breaks the *Saṁgha*, be it monk or nun, shall be clad in white raiment and compelled to live in what is not a residence (of the clergy)."[5]

[1] मातापित्रोरात्मनश्च पुण्ययशोभिवृद्धये आचान्द्रार्कं क्षितिकालीनम् ।
Ep. Ind. Vol. XIV, p. 159.

[2] इधं न किंचि जीवं आरभित्पा प्रजूहितव्यं न च समाजो कतथवो । बहुकं हि दोसं समाजँहि पसति देवानं पियो प्रियदसि राजा । *R.E.* I.

[3] धंमचरणे पि न भवति असीलस । *R.E.* IV.

[4] एस तु पीरसूवे य अपुंञ्नं । *R.E.* X.

[5] ये केन पि संघे भेतवे । एं चुं खो भिखु वा भिखुनिवा संघं भखति से ओदातानि दुसानि संनंधापयिया अनावाससि आवासयिये । *Sarnath PE.*

The regular imprecatony formula, like the laudatory one, appears in the last quarter of the 4th century A.D. and it is mostly found in the copper-plate land grants, side by side with the laudatory formula, though its sporadic uses are found in other types of inscriptions also. A few examples are reproduced below:

"Whosoever comes into conflict with this meriotirous deed and violates above-written arrangements will meet with Five Great Sins[1] and also with Five Secondary Sins."[2]

"Whosoever resumes or takes back the land gifted by himself or by someone else, having been born as a germ in the night-soil, suffers with his ancestors. The interferer and one who advises him to do so lives in the hell for that period of time."[3]

"Whosoever transgresses this religious gift properly constituted, should be considered as a murderer of a cow, a preceptor, and a Brāhmaṇa. Being attached with Five Great Sins and Five Secondary Sins, he goes to the neither-world."[4]

"Those, who resume religious gift, are born as black serpents, living in dried-up cavities in the (terrible) forests of the Vindhya ranges devoid of water."[5]

1 ब्रह्महत्या सुरापानं स्तेयं गुर्वंगनागमः ।
महंति पातकान्याहुस्तत्संसर्गश्च पंचमम् ॥ *Manu.* XI. 54.

2 यश्च कीर्त्यभिद्रोहं कुर्याद्यश्चाभिलिखितमुपर्यधो वा स पंचभिर्महापातकै रूपपातकैश्च संयुक्तस्स्यात् । *Mathura Pillar Ins. of Chandragupta* II. (G.E. 61=380 A.D.) *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXI, p. 8f.

3 स्वदत्ता परदत्तां वा यो हरेत वसुन्धरां ।
स विष्ठायां कृमिभूत्वां पितृभिः सह पच्यते ॥
आक्षेप्ता चानुमन्ता च तान्येव नरके वसेत् । *Dhanaidha Copper-plate Ins. of Kumārgupta* I. (G.E. 113=432 A.D.) *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVII, p. 495 ff.

4 यो व्यक्क्रमेद्दायमिदं निबद्धं गोघ्नो गुरुघ्नो द्विजघातकः सः ।
तैः पातकैः पञ्चभिरन्वितोऽधर्ग्गच्छेन्नरः सोपनिपातकैश्च ॥
Ind. Ant. XVIII, p. 218.

5 विन्ध्यटवीष्वनम्भसु शुष्ककोटरवासिनः ।
कृष्णाहिनो(हयो)हि जायन्ते देवदायं हरन्ति ये ॥ *Ep. Ind.*, XX, p. 61.

"Whosoever interferes with this gift deserves a capital punishment and unites to Five Great Sins and Five Secondary Sins. Gods do not receive offerings from him nor manes *pindas* offered by him. He is born as a *vetala* with head cut off and falls down without honour..."[1]

"Having regarded the wealth of the mortals as being constituted by the numerous waves of lightning, the religious establishments should not be violated by the wise in the world."[2]

"One, who takes back (gifted) land full of luxurious crops, having been born as a germ in the excreta of a dog, sinks with his ancestors."[3]

"Whosoever resumes the earth gifted by himself or by others, he attains to the sins of one, who kills one lac of cows."[4]

"Whosoever, disregarding this grant, commits slightest infringement or causes others to do so, he, reported against by the (donee) Brāhmaṇa, will be restrained with punishment..."[5]

"One, who resumes the earth gifted by him or by some one else, gets the sins of that person who steals away one lack of cows."[6]

1 एवमवधृते योऽथ करोति स बध्यः पञ्चभिमहापातकैः सोपपातकैः संयुक्तः स्यादपि च ।
नास्य देवा न पितरो हविः पिण्डं समान्पयुः । *Mallasarul Ins. of Vijayasena*, *Ep. Ind.*, XXIII, p. 159ff.
छिन्नमस्तकवेतालः अप्रतिष्ठः पतिष्यति ॥

2 तडित्तरंगबहुलां श्रियं मत्वा च मर्त्यानां ।
न धर्मस्थितयस्सद्भिः युक्ता लोके विलोपपितुम् ॥ ibid.

3 सर्वसस्यसमृद्धां तु यो हरेत वसुन्धरां ।
श्वविष्ठायां कृमिर्भूत्वा पितृभिस्सह मज्जते ॥ Fleet : *C.I.I.* Vol. III, p. 126 ff.

4 स्वदत्तां परदत्तां वा यो हरेत वसुन्धरा ।
गवां शत सहस्रस्य हन्तुः प्राप्नोति किल्विशम् ॥ *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVI, p. 18f.

5 यश्चास्मच्छासनमगणयमान स्स्वल्पामप्यत्रावाधां कुर्यात् कारयीत (येत) वा तस्यब्राह्मण
रावेदितस्य (ब्राह्मणैः) सदण्डनिग्रहं कुर्य्यामि । *Poona Copper-plate of* Prabhāvatigupta, *Ep. Ind.*, XV, 41ff.

6 स्वदत्ताम्परदत्तां वा यो हरेत वसुन्धरां ।
गवाँ शतसहस्त्रस्य हन्तुर्हरन्ति दुष्कृतम् ॥ Ibid.

"The resumer (of this gift) unites to Five Great Sins.

× × × × ×

One, who takes back land given by him or by some one else, remains in the pitch darkness (of the hell) for sixty-thousand years."[1]

The imprecatory stanzas, like the laudatory ones, get hackneyed and stereotyped during the period between the sixth and the thirteenth centuries A.D. The only changes noticeable are in the number of stanzas reproduced, the terminology of these stanzas and their order in which they are quoted. Tendencies to paraphrase the imprecatory verses into prose, some times in the vernacular of the region concerned, and to abbreviate are also observed. Some of the *Śilāhāra* and the *Yādava* records do not quote ancient imprecatory *ślokas* but give at the end a vulgar sentence called 'ass-curse'; some-times in place of such a sentence there is found a representation of an ass on uninscribed hero-memorial stones (*gaddhe-galas.*).[2]

6. *Conclusion.*

Concluding formula was not fixed for long in the early history of Indian palæography and even later on, when it became customary to end a document with some formula there was no uniformity about it. There was a large variety of conclusion and the emphasis on ending varied with the religious, moral or legal importance of the document or the similar tendencies of the writer.

The Piprahwa Buddhist Vase Inscription,[3] the Mahasthana Stone-plaque Inscription[4] and the Sohgaura Copper-plate Inscription[5] are short documents and they do not contain indications

[1] योऽस्य हर्ता स पञ्चमहापातक संयुक्तो भवति ।

× × × ×

स्वदत्ताम्परदत्तां वा यो हरेत्त वसुन्धरां ।

षष्ठिं वर्षसहस्त्राणि घोरे तमसि वर्तते ॥ *Ep. Ind.*, XIV, p. 334 ff.

[2] *Lüder's List*, No. 215; Burgess & Consens, *Rev. List*, No. II, 253, 324, 351.

[3] *Indian Ant*, Vol. XXXVI., p. 117 ff.

[4] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXI, p. 85 ff.

[5] *Ibid.*, Vol. XXII, p. 2.

of concious attempts at a set or finished ending. The Aśokan edicts, however, contain the following concluding phrases, which appear to be conscious and are capable of classification:

(1) *Benedictory*—

(i) "For the enjoyment of man and animal."[1]

(ii) "...it may long endure and that my progeny may follow me."[2]

(iii) "May all (their) strong attachment be attachment to exertion for *Dhaṁma*."[3]

(2) *Laudatory*—

(i) "Both are here gained, to wit that object of this world and the begetting of endless merit in the next through that *Dhaṁma-maṅgala*."[4]

(ii) "And this is its fruit—the exaltation of one's own sect and the illumination of *Dhaṁma*."[5]

(3) *Dating and Mentioning the Agent.*

(i) "This was caused to be written by king *Priyadarśin*, Beloved of gods, when he was consecrated twelve years."[6]

(ii) "Twenty-five jail deliveries have been effected by me who am consecrated twenty-six years, just in that period."[7]

(iii) "This *Dhaṁma lipi* was caused to be engraved by me when I had been anointed twenty-seven years."[8]

(4) *Naming the engraver.*

(i) "It has been written by Paḍa, the engraver."[9]

[1] प्रतिभोगाय पशुमनुसानं। *R.E. II.*

[2] चिरठितिक होतु मे पजा अनुवतन्तु। *R.E.V*; *R.E.* VI.

[3] स च ति रति भोतु य ध्रंमरति। *R.E.* XIII.

[4] हिद च से अथ्र परत्र च अनत पुणं प्रसवति तेन ध्रममंगलने। *R.E.* IX.

[5] इमं च एतिस फलं य आत्म पासंड वढि च होति धंयस च दीपना। *R.E.* XII.

[6] द्वादसवसाभिसितेन देवानं पियेन प्रियदसिना राञा इदं लेखापितं। *R.E.* IV.

[7] सडुविसति वसाभिसित स मे एताये अंतलिकाये पंनवीसति बंधन मोखानि कटानि *PE.* V.

[8] सतविसतिवसाभिसितेन मे इयं धंमलिवि लिखापापिता ति। *PE.* VII.

[9] पडेन लिखितं लिपिकरेण। *Brahmagiri Minor R.E.*

(5) Proclamatory

(i) "The proclamation has been made."[1]

(ii) "The Beloved of the gods proclaims like this."[2]

The system of conclusion in the *Aśokan* inscriptions was not yet regular. But it can be seen from the above-quoted passages that the edicts of *Aśoka* contained the germs of some concluding formulæ which were developed later on.

The Besnagar Garuda-pillar Inscription of the *Śuṅga* period has for its conclusion a moral precept loosely connected with the contents of the inscription:

> "There immortal steps—self-control, renunciation and vigilance-properly followed here, will lead to the heaven."[3]

The inscriptions of the Indo-Greeks, the *Śakas* and the *Kuṣaṇas* form a category by themselves. Their conclusion consists of the followiug:

(1) *Name of the writer*

(i) "Written by Viśpilena who was ordered (to do so.)"[4]

(ii) "Written by Mahipati."[5]

(iii) "Written by Madhu..."[6]

(2) *Name of the Architect*

(i) "Khalaśamuśa, the architect."[7]

(ii) "By Budhila, the architect."[8]

(3) *Name of the Agents*

(i) "Of Jihoṇika, the ruler of Chukṣa."[9]

[1] सावने कटे । *Rupanath Minor R.E.*

[2] हेवं देवानं पिये आनपयति । *Yeṛṛgudi Minor* R.E.

[3] त्रिनि अमुत-पदानि इअ सु-अनुठितानि ।
नेयंति स्वगं दम चाग अप्रमाद ॥ *Arch. Sur. Ind. Annual Report*, 1908-09, p. 126.

[4] विश्पिलेन अणंकतेन । *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XXIV, p. 7.

[5] लिखिद् महिफतिएन Ibid. Vol. XVIII, p. 15 ff

[6] इमो च लिखितो मधु Ibid. XIV, p. 143.

[7] खलशमुशः (इति नवकर्मिकः) Ibid., IX, p. 141 ff.

[8] सध बुधिलेन नवकर्मिगेण Konow: *C.I.I.*, Vol. II, p. 149 ff.

[9] जिहोणिकस चुख्सस क्षत्रपस । Ibid., p. 82.

(ii) "By *Mahākṣatrapa* Kharapallāna with *Kṣatrapa* Vanaṣpara."[1]

(4) *Benediction*

(i) "For the welfare of the majority."[2]

(ii) "May it be for the honour of the mother and the father."[3]

(iii) "May it be for the attainment of *Nirvāṇa*,"[4]

(iv) "May complete renunciation be obtained."[5]

(v) "May it be for the welfare and happiness of all creatures."[6]

(5) *Dedication*

(i) "Dedicated to the teachers of the *sarvāstivādi sects.*"[7]

(ii) "Religious gift by *Madhurikā*."[8]

(iii) "Dedicated to the teachers of the *Mahāsāṁghika* sect."[9]

The concluding formulæ applied in the records *Kṣaharātas* of *Mahārāṣṭra*, the *Kṣattrapas of Ujjaiyinī*, the *Sātavāhanas*, the Ailas of Kalinga and the *Ikṣvākus of Āndhradeśa* fall under the following groups :

(1) *Dedication and Date.*

(i) "By him, again, was given in the year 41, bright half of the month of Kartika, fifteen day...for the gods and the Brahmanas."[10]

(ii) "This religious gift...was made in the year 46."[11]

[1] महाक्षत्रपेन खरपल्लानेन सहा क्षत्रपेन वनष्परेन । *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VIII, p. 173 ff.

[2] वहुजनहिताय । Konow : *C.I.I.*, Vol. II, p. 4.

[3] मदु पिदु पूअए । *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVIII, p. 282.

[4] णिवणस प्रतिअए होतु । Ibid., Vol. XXI, p. 259.

[5] होतु अयदे सम परिचगो । Ibid. XIV, p. 295.

[6] सर्व सत्वनं हिता सुखार्त्थं । Ibid. Vol. VIII, p. 173 ff.

[7] आचार्य्यान सर्वास्तिवादिनं परिग्रहे । *Ep. Ind.* Vol. IX, p. 29.

[8] मधुरिक····णं देयधर्म Ibid. Vol. II, p. 369-70.

[9] अचर्यण महसंधिगण परिग्रह । Ibid. Vol. XI, p. 210 f.

[10] भूयोनेन दत्तं वसे ४० + १ कातिक-शूधेपनरस-देवानं ब्राह्मणानं च ।
Ep. Ind. Vol. VIII, p. 82 f.

[11] देयधम···वसे ४० + ६ कतो । *Arch. Sur. W. India*, Vol. IV, p. 103.

(iii) "This *paṭṭikā* was given in the year 18, in the second fortnight of rainy (*Srāvaṇa*) month, on the first day."[1]

(2) *Benediction and Date.*

(i) "Year 200+1 . May there be auspiciousness."[2]

(ii) "For the attainment of the welfare and happiness of the entire world this pillar was erected. In the year 6 of Śrī-Virapuruṣadatta, in the rainy fortnight 6 (=bright fortnight of *Āśvina*), on the tenth day."[3]

(iii) "In the year 18 of Śrī-Virapuruṣadatta, 6 the fortnight of *Hemanta*, date 5. May it be for the welfare and happiness of all creatures."[4]

(3) *Dedication.*

(i) "(Income) from this will form the main source of the maintenance of the order of the monks living in the cave constructed by me and coming from the four direction."[5]

(ii) "The religious gift of Dakṣamitrā, this cave-dwelling.[6]"

(iii) "The village named Karjika has been donated for the maintenance of all who live (in this cave) during the rainy season."[7]

[1] दता पटिका सवछरे १० + ८ वासपखे २ दिवसे १ ।
Ep. Ind. Vol. VIII, p. 71 Note.

[2] 200+1 [स्वस्त्यस्तु] *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XVI, p. 232.

[3] सव-लोक-हित-सुखावहथनाय च इमं खंभं पतिथपितं ति ।
रंञो सिरि वीर पुरिसदतस सव ६ वा प ६ दि १० ॥
Ep. Ind., Vol. XX, p. 16.

[4] रंञो सिरि वीर पुरिसदतस संवछरं अठार सं० १० + ८ हेमन्त पखं छठं ६ दिवसं पंचमं ५। सव सतानं हिताय सुखाय होतु ति । Ibid. p. 21.

[5] एतो मम लेने वसतानं चातुदसिस भिखुसघस मुखाहारो भविसती ।
Ep. Ind. Vol. VIII, p. 78 No. 10.

[6] दखमित्राय देयधम ओवरको । *Ep. Ind.* Vol. VII, p. 81, No. 11.

[7] गामो करजिको दतो सवान वास-वासितानं ।
Ep. Ind. Vol. VIII, p. 57, No. 13.

(iv) "To the order of the Buddhist monks, coming from all the four directions, this residence has been given."[1]

(4) *Benediction*

(i) "Increasing the piety, good deeds and fame of his master, it has been accomplished by him."[2]

(ii) "This pond has been dug and constructed for the welfare and happiness of all living creatures."[3]

(iii) "This pillar...has been raised for the attainment of the happiness of the heaven."[4]

(5) *Eulogy and Benediction*

(i) "The great victorious king Śri-Khāravela, born in the family of the royal sage Vasu is (may become) the king of auspiciousness and prosperity, the prince among the monks, the prince of piety and he, experiencing, seeing and hearing the good, may become endowed with special qualities, the worshipper of all religious sects, the respecter of all religious shrines; may possess chariots, conveyance and army undaunted ; may his rule be protected and well established !"[5]

(6) *Date*

(i) "In the year 6th of Śri-Vīrapuruṣadatta, sixth fortnight of the rainy seasson (bright fortnight of *Āśvina*) on the 10th day".[6]

(ii) "In the second year of king Śri-Ehubula Śantamūla, the son of Vāsiṣṭhi and born in the family

[1] चातुदिसस च भिखु-सघस आवसो दतो ति । *Ep. Ind.* Vol. VIII, p. 94 No. 24.

[2] धर्म-कीर्ति-यशांसि भर्तुरभिवर्द्धयतानुष्ठितमिति । Ibid. p. 42 ff.

[3] वापी खानिता बन्धापिता च सर्वसत्वानां हित सुखार्थमिति । *Ep. Ind.* XVI, p. 235.

[4] इदं शान्यं उत्थावित स्वर्गसुखार्थं । *Ep. Ind.* XVI, p. 238.

[5] खेम राजा स बढराज स भिखुराजा पसंतो सुनंतो अनुभवतो कलानानि गुण-विशेषकुसलो सब-पाषंड-पूजको सबदेवायतन-सकार-कारको अपतिहत-चक-वाहन-यानवलो चकधरो गुतचको पवतचको राजसि-वसु-कुल विनिश्रितो महाविजयो राज खारवेल सिरि । *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XX, p. 72 ff.

[6] रंञो सिरि विरपुरिसदतस संव ६ वाप ६ दि १० । *Ep. Ind.* XX, p. 19 f.

of the *Ikṣvākus*, sixth fortnight of the summer season, on the tenth day."[1]

(7) *The Name of the Agent, Engraver or Architect.*

(i) "By Madana, the son of Siṁhila—this stone-staff was erected."[2]

(ii) "By Treṣṭadatta, the Śrāmaṇera (an apprentice for for becoming a full-fledged *Bhikṣu*), the stone-staff was erected."[3]

(iii) 'It was engraved by *Tāpasa*."[4]

(iv) "This construction was planned by the architects Chaṇḍmukha-thera, Dhaṁma-nandi-thera and Naya—thera. It was the work of stone-cutter Vidhika."[5]

Between the Mauryan and the Gupta periods of Indian history the conclusion of a document was not an haphazard ending; it assumed a form and a finish which were later on followed and further evolved and expanded. Of all the concluding formulæ '*svastyāstu*, (May there be auspiciousness!) was very promising, because it became very popular in the subsequent periods of Indian history. It was a kind of benediction; but it gathered a mystic significance about it. It was used both as an intiatory and a concluding formula.

The palæographic records assigned to the period between the fourth and the sixth centuries A.D, and mostly belonging to the *Gupta*, the *Vākāṭaka*, the *Pallava*, the *Kadamba*, the *Ganga* and some other minor dynasties, betray as many varieties of conclusion as the records of the previous period, with the difference that they show greater hold of *Dharmaśāstra* and law, and the Puranic and Epic litetature on the form of

[1] रंञो वासिठी-पुतस इक्खाकून सिरि एहुवुल-चंतमूलस संवच्छरं वितियं गिम्ह-पक्खं छठं ६ दिवसं दसमं १०। *Ep. Ind.* XXI, p. 62.

[2] मदनेन सिहिल पुत्रेन लष्टि उथापिता। *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XVI, p. 23 ff. No. 3.

[3] त्रेष्टदतेन श्रामणेरेन लष्टि उथापित। Ibid., No. 4.

[4] तापसेन कटा। *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VIII, p. 71 No. 4.

[5] इमं नव कंमं तिहि नवकंम तिहि नवकंम केहि कारितं चंदमुखथेरेन च धंमनंदि-थेरेन च। सेल वढ़ाकिस विधिकस कंमं ति : *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XX, p. 22.

conclusion. They also indicate growing influence of Hinduism in comparision with Buddhism and Jainism. It may also be pointed out that the mention of the date, the composer or writer, the executor, the engraver, the agent etc. becomes more frequent than in the previous period. The following is the classification of the varieties of conclusion :

(1) *The Name of the Composer, the Executor, the Engraver, the Agent etc.*

(i) Now may this poetical composition of Hariṣeṇa *Sāndhi-vigvahika*, *Kumāramātya* and *Mahadaṇḍanāyaka* ... and it is executed by *Mahadaṇḍanāyaka* Tila-bhattaka, who meditates on the feet of the emperor."[1]

(ii) "It was engraved by Īśvaradāsa."[2]

(iii) "*Dūtaka* (representative of the king) Subhadatta. Written by Bhogachandra, the *Sāndhi-vigrahika*. It was heated by Jayadāsa, the *Pustapāla*."[3]

(iv) "These verses were composed by Vāsula, the son of Kakka. (They were) engraved by Govinda."[4]

(v) "It was incised by Chakradāsa."[5]

(vi) "*Dūtaka* Devanandasvāmī. Written by Prabhu-siṁha."[6]

(vii) "This copper-plate was engraved by Apāpa, the noble son of a goldsmith."[7]

[1] एतच्च काव्यं···सान्धिविग्रहिककुमारामात्य महादण्डनायक हरिषेणस्य.........
अनुष्ठितं च परमभट्टारक-पादानुध्यातेन महादण्ड नायक तिलभट्टकेन ।
Fleet, *C.I.I.* Vol. III, p. 6 ff.

[2] उत्कीर्णाईश्वरदासेन । *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 347 ff.

[3] दूतकः शुभदत्तो लिखितं सान्धिविग्रहिक-भोगचन्द्रेण । तापितं पुस्तपालजयदासेन ।
Ep. Ind., Voı. XXIII, p. 159 ff.

[4] वासुलेनोपरचिताः श्लोकाः कक्कस्य सूनुना उत्कीर्णा गोविन्देन ।
Fleet, *C.I.I.* Vol. III, p. 146 ff.

[5] चक्रदासेनोत्कट्टितम् । *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XV, p. 41 ff.

[6] दु (दू) तक देवनन्दस्वामी । लीखिता । (लिखिता) प्रभुसिङ्घ (सिंहे) न !
Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, New series Calcutta, Vol. XX, p. 58 ff.

[7] सुवर्णकार आर्य पुत्रेण अपापेन लिखितेयन्ताम्रपट्टिका । *Ep. Ind.*, XIV, p. 334.

(viii) "This was written by *Mahārāja Sāndhi-vighika* Devasiṁhadeva."[1]

(2) *Date*.

(i) "In the year 128 of the reign of *Mahārāja* Śrī-Kumāragupta, the month of *Jyeṣṭha*, on the 18th day."[2]

(ii) "Year 100 + 80 + 8, the month of *Pauṣa*, on the 24th day."[3]

(iii) "Year 100 + 20 + 8, the month of *Māgha*, date 19."[4]

(iv) "In the (regnal) year 18 of *Senāpati* Chitravarman, the month of *Māgha*, the bright fortnight, date 13."[5]

(v) "In the prosperous year 39, the month of *Vaiśakh* date 21."[6]

(3) *Benediction*

(i) "This poetic composition pertaining to the restoration of the lake *Sudarśana* has been finished well."[7]

(ii) "May he, composed of pure body, with his mother, father, elders and ancestors, through this meritorious act (of erecting an image of the Buddha) obtain the desired peace."[8]

[1] लिखितमिदं महाराज्ञो सान्धिविग्रहीक-देवसिङ्ह देवेनेति। *Ep. Ind.*, XXV, p. 286.

[2] सम्वत् १०० + २० + ८ महाराज श्री कुमारगुप्तस्य राज्ये ज्येष्ठमास-दि १० + ८ Fleet. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 46 ff.

[3] सं० १०० + ८० + ८ पौष्य (पौष) दि २० + ४। *Ind. Hist. Quart.*, VI, 53 ff.

[4] सं० १०० + २० + ८ माघ. दि १० + ९। *Ep. Ind.* XXI, p. 81 f.

[5] सेनापतौ चित्रवर्मणि संव्वत्सरे दृष्टादश १० + ८ ज्येष्ठमास-शुक्लपक्ष-त्रयोदश्यां शासनं लिखित मिति। Fleet, *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 236 ff.

[6] प्रवर्द्धमान–सं ३० + ९ वैशाख दि २० + १। *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XXV, p. 286 ff.

[7] [इति] [सुद] र्शन-तटाक-संस्कार-ग्रंथरचना (स) माप्ता।
Fleet, *C.I.I.* Vol. III, p. 58 ff.

[8] माता पितृ-गुरु-पूर्वैः पुण्येनानेन सत्वकायोऽयं।
लभतामभिमतमुपशाम × × × + ॥
Arch. Sur. India A.R. 1914-15, p. 124.

(iii) "Whatever merits I have gained by having erected this image may accrue to my mother, father, elders and the world."[1]

(iv) "May it be auspicious to all creatures headed by the cows and the *Brāhmaṇas*."[2]

(v) "As long as the oceans are in possession of jewels ; the earth full of various orchards, trees, forests and mountains ; and as long as the moon shines in the sky variegated by the assembly of planets, so long there may be wide fame to Śrī-Mayūrākṣa. May there be accomplishment."[3]

(vi) "May the world, on account of the destruction of its entire afflictions and blemishes, attain to the status (*nirvāṇa*) free from sorrow and decay, calm and noble."[4]

(vii) "May auspiciousness accrue to cows, *Brāhmaṇas*, the writer, the reciter and the listner."[5]

(4) *Dedication*

(i) "...having, with devotion, fixed his mind upon (the god) Viṣṇu, this lofty standard of Lord Viṣṇu was set up on the hill (called) Viṣṇupada."[6]

[1] यदत्र पुण्यं प्रतिमाँ कारयित्वा मया भृतम् ।
माता पित्रोर्गुरुणां च लोकस्य च समाप्तये ॥ ibid. pp. 125-126.

[2] स्वस्त्यस्तु गो-ब्राह्मण पुरोगाभ्यः सर्व्वप्रजाभ्य इति । Fleet, *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 89.

[3] यावच्च.................................
...............................सगरा रत्नवन्तो ।
नानागुल्मद्रुम-वनवती यावदुर्वी सशैला ॥
यावच्चेन्दुर्ग्रहगण- चितं व्योम भासी करोति ।
तावत्कीर्तिभवतु विपुला श्री मयूराक्ष कस्येदिति कस्य ॥ इति ॥ सिद्धिरस्तु ।
Fleet, *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 74 ff.

[4] जगदपि च समस्त-ब्यस्त-दोष-प्रहाणाद्विशतु पदमशोकं निज्वंरं शान्तमार्यं ।
Indian Culture, Vol. VII, p. 372.

[5] स्वस्ति गो ब्राह्मण-लेखक-वाचक-श्रोतृभ्य इति । *Ep. Ind.* Vol. I, p. 5 ff.

[6] तेनायं प्राणिधाय भूमिपतिना भावेन विष्णौ मतिं ।
प्रांशु विष्णुपदे गिरौ भगवतो विष्णोर्ध्वजः स्थापितः ॥
Fleet. *C.I.I.* Vol. III. p. 141.

(ii) "This celestial gate (of the temple) was erected by the noble lady."[1]

(5) *Laudation*

(i) "The earth has been given by many and it will be given repeatedly in future. The merits of a land grant, if respected, accrues to one who possesses the earth (rules over it)."[2]

(ii) "The wife, devoted to her husband, very much attached to him, dear and beautiful, clinging to his body and following him, mounted the funeral pyre of her husband)."[3]

(6) *Imprecation*

(i) "Whosoever takes back the land gifted by himself or by somebody else, having been born as a germ in the night-soil, will suffer (in the hell) with his ancestors."[4]

(ii) Whosoever transgresses this religious gift properly constituted should be regarded as a killer of the cows and a murderer of the elders and the *Brāhmaṇas*..."[5]

(iii) "To that length of time the resumer of a land-grant and his adviser remain in the hell."[7]

(7) *The order of the king.*

(i) "Personal Order."[7]

1 दत्ता अयाया देवदार । *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVIII, p. 160.

2 बहुभिर्वसुधा दत्ता दीयते च पुनः पुनः ।
यस्य यस्य यदा भूमिस्तस्य तस्य तदा फलम् ॥
Ep. Ind., Vol. XV, p. 133 f. Also see, *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XV, p. 138 f; Fleet. *C.I.I.* Vol. III, p. 114 f.

3 भक्तानुरक्ता च प्रिया च कान्ता ।
भार्यावलग्नानुगताग्निराशिम् ॥ Fleet. Vol. III, p. 92 f.

4 स्वदत्तां परदत्तां वा यो हरेत् वसुन्धरां ।
स विष्ठायां कृमिर्भूत्वा पितृभिस्सह पच्येत ॥ *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XV, p. 130 f.

5 यो व्यक्क्रमेद्दायमिमं निबद्धं गोघ्नो गुरुघ्नो द्विजघातकः सः ।
etc., Fleet. *C.I.I.* Vol. III, p. 70 f.

6 आक्षेप्ता चानुमन्ता च तान्येव नरके वसेदिते ।
Ep. Ind., Vol. XV, p. 135 f. *Ibid*, 142 f.

स्वयमाज्ञा । *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVI, p. 18 f.

(ii) "Personal Order."[1]

(iii) "Order."[2]

From the seventh century onward the copper-plates develop a conclusion consisting of 'my own hand (—writing *Mahārājādhirāja* Śri so and so."[3] The inscription of other types, however, follow the forms set by the *Gupta* and the *Vākāṭaka* records. For instance one *Chālukya* record ends in benediction-cum-eulogy:

> "May that Ravikīrti be victorious, who full of discernment has made use of the abode of the Jina, firmly built of stone, for a new treament of his theme, and who by his poetic skill has attained to the fame of Kālidasa and of Bhāravi."[4]

In the inscriptions of early mediæval India, both in the North and in the South, we do not come across any new and important form of conclusion othe than those already dealt with. The only innovations are the repetition of the formula '*Śri*' (standing for goddess of prosperity)[5] the emergence of the formulæ, '*Maṅgala*',[6] *Maṅgalaṁ Mahāśrīḥ*[7] or *Maṅgala Mahāśri*[8], and invocations and salutations to new sectariam deities' e.g. 'Salutation to Śri Gopinātha *(Kṛṣṇa)*'[9] This was a period of imitation and compilation in pure, as well as in legal literature. This fact is reflected in palæographic accords also.

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[1] आज्ञाप्तिः स्वयम् । *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VI, p. 86 ff.

[2] आज्ञाप्तिः । *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. I, p. 2 No. 2.

[3] cf. स्वहस्तो मम महाराजाधिराज श्रीहर्षस्य । *Ep. Ind.* Vol. IV, p. 208.

[4] स विजयतां रविकीर्तिः कविताश्रितकालिदासभारविकीर्तिः ।
Ep. Ind., Vol. VI, p. 1.

[5] मंगलं महाश्रीः श्रीः श्रीः ।
Miraja plates of Jayasimha Western Chālukya of Kalyan, A.D. 1024 (*Ind. Ant*, p. 18).

[6] *Ep. Ind.*, IX, p. 141.

[7] *Lüder's List*, Nos. 151, 152, 162, 168, 175, etc.

[8] *Serma plates of Parmardideva*, 1166. A.D. *Ep. Ind.* IV, p. 153.

[9] श्री गोपीनाथाय नमः । *Lüder's List*. No. 332.

CHAPTER X

SYSTEM OF DATING AND ERAS USED.

A regular system of dating does not seem to be introduced in the early history of writing, as the earliest deciphered inscriptions discovered in India are generally undated. The system of dating was not widely current as late as the reign of Aśoka, as the majority of his edicts do not bear any date.[1] Even after the introduction of this system, the dating of records in India did not become universal. The bulk of inscriptions was issued by private individuals and the majority of them is un-dated. The class of official documents is sufficiently extensive, but even for this class dating was not compulsory. The dating of documents became widely current from the second century A.D. and went on increasing with the use of regular eras started in India. A brief survey of the system of dating and the eras used is attempted below:

1. *Pre-Mauryan Inscriptions*

The Indus valley inscriptions on seals and tablets, which are still undeciphered, are not likely to be dated, because they are fragmentary. After a long gap we come across the Baḍli pillar inscription[2] and the Piprahwa vase inscription,[3] which are assigned to the pre-Mauryan times.[4] Of these two only the former is dated. It consists of two lines. In the first line '*Virāya bhagavata*' and in the second '*Chaturāsiti vasa*' are engraved. Dating is done in the second line, which means 'year eighty-four'. According to Mm. Pt. Gaurishankar Hirā-Chand Ojhā, this year should be referred to the *Vīranirvāṇa-saṁvat* (era started from the death of the Jain Tirthaṅkara Mahāvira).[5]

[1] Badli inscription is dated 84 Mahavira Era, which is exceptional. See Rajputana Museum; Ojha, *Prāchīna-lipimālā*, p. 2.

[2] Ibid.

[3] *J.R.A.S.*, 1898, p. 389.

[4] See Ojha, *Prāchīna-lipimālā*, pp. 2-3.

[5] Ibid.

2. *Mahāvira Era or Vīra-Nirvāṇa Era.*

The *Vīra-nirvāṇa-saṁvat* or the Mahāvīra Era is mostly used in the Jaina MSS.; its use in the inscriptions is very rare. The *Śvetāmbara* writer Merutuṅga Sūri, in his work '*Vichāraśreṇī*' writes that the difference between the Mahāvira Era and the Vikrama Era is that of 470 years.[1] According to this statement the Mahāvira Era was started in 57 + 470 = 527 B.C. This statement is corroborated by another Jain work '*Mahāvīra-chariyam*' of Nemichandrāchārya, which states, "Six hundred and five years and five months after my (Mahāvira's) *nirvāṇa* (demise) the Śaka king will be born."[2] On calculation we get the same date, 527 (= 605 – 78) B.C., for the start of the Mahāvira Era. The *Digambara* writer Nemichandra in his book '*Trilokasāra*' supports the above-mentioned tradition.[3]

Some of the Digambara traditions regarding the starting point of the Mahāvira Era are, however, confused. Mādhava-chandra, commenting upon the *Trilokasāra* identified '*Sagarāja*' (Śaka-king) with Vikramāṅka and started the *Mahāvīra* Era from 57 + 605 = 662 B.C.[4] This identification is totally wrong; but the majority of the later Jain writers of this sect followed it. The subsequent *Digambara* traditions regarding the starting point of the *Vīra-Nirvāṇa* Era are entirely untrustworthy, because they give the difference between the *nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira and the Śaka Era as 461 years, 9795 years and sometimes as 14793 years.[5] The last two are obviously absurd and no reliance can be placed on these traditions.

3. *Mauryan Inscriptions.*

So far no inscriptions of Chandragupta and Bindusāra, the first two kings of the Mauryan dynasty, has been discovered.

1 विक्कमरज्जारंभा परउ सिरिवीरनिव्वुईभणिया ।
सुन्नमुणि वे अजुतो विक्कमकालउ जिणकालो ।। *Vichāraśreṇī.*

2 छहि वासाण स एहिं पंचहिं वासेहिं पंच मासेहिं ।
मम निव्वण गयस्य उ उप्पज्जिस्सइ सगोराया ।। *Mahāvirachariyam.*

3 पणछस्सयवस्सं पणमासजुदं गमिञ्च वीरनिव्वुईदो सगराजो । Verse No. 848.

4 श्रीवीरनाथनिवृत्तेः सकाशात् पञ्चोत्तरषट्छतवर्षाणि पञ्चमासयुतानि गत्वा पश्चात् विक्रमाङ्क शकराजोऽजायत । Comment on the verse No. 848.

5 *Triloka-vijñapti*, *Jain-hitaiṣī*, XIII. 12, Dec. 1917, p. 533.

The third ruler of the dynasty, Aśoka, under his religious inspiration, issued a large number of edicts. His grandson Daśarath also issued some dated inscriptions. In the dated inscriptions the following exracts indicate the system or the arrangement of dating :[1]

Reference	*Pali Texts*	*English Translation*
(i) RE. III	द्वादसवसाभिसितेन मया इदं आज्ञपितं ।	This ordered was issued by me, *who had been consecrated twelve years.*
(ii) RE. IV	द्वादस वसाभिसितेन देवानं पियेन राञा इदं लेखापितं ।	This was caused to be written by king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, *who had been consecrated for twelve years.*
(iii) RE. V	त्रेदश वषभिसितेन मय ध्रम महमत्र कट ।	*Dharma-mahāmātras* were created by me, *who had been consecratedfor thirteen years.*
(iv) R.E. VIII	देवानं पियो पियदसि राजा दसवसाभिसितो संतो अयाय संबोधिं ।	King Priyadarśī, Beloved of the gods, repaired to Saṁbodhi (Bodha-Gaya) *who had been consecrated for twelve years.*
(v) RE. XIII	अठ-वषाभिसितषा देवानं पियष पियदषिने लाजिने कलिंग्या विजिता ।	Kalinga was conquered by king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, *who had been consecrated for eight years.*
(vi) PE. I&IV	सड्-वीसति-वस-अभिसितेन मे इयं धंमलिपि लिखापिता ।	This *Dhammalipi* was caused to be written by me, *who had been consecrated for twenty-six years.*
(vii) PE. V	सड्--वीसति-वस--अभिसितेन मे इमानि पि जातानि अवध्यानि कटानि ।	These animals were declared unworthy of slaughter by me, *who had been consecrated for twenty-six years.*

[1] Vide Hultzsch, *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. I.

Reference	Pali Texts	English Translation
(viii) PE. VI	दुआडस-वसाभिसितेन मे इयं धंमलिवि लिखा-पापिता ति ।	I caused *Dhammalipi* to be written, *who had been consecrated for twelve years.*
(ix) PE. VII	सत-विसति-वसाभिसितेन मेइयं धंमलिवि लिखा-पापिता ति ।	This *Dhammalipi* was caused to be engraved by me, *who has been anointed twenty-seven years.*
(x) Minor PE. (Remmindei)	देवान फ्येिन पियदसिन लाजिन वीसति-वसा-भिसितेन अतन आगाच महीयिते ।	King Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, *who had been consecrated for twenty years,* came in the person and did worship.
(xi) Minor PE (Niglive Sagar)	देवानं पियेन पियदसिन लाजिन चोदसवसा-भिसितेन बुधस कोना-कमनस थुबे दुतियं बढिते ।	King Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, *who had been consecrated for fourteen years,* enlarged for second time the stupa of Buddha Konā-Kamana.
(xii) Cave Ins. (Barabar)	लाजिना पियदसिना दुआडसवसाभिसितेन इयं निगोह-कुभा दिना आजीविकेहि ।	This Banyan cave was given to the Ājīvikas by king Priyadarśin, *wha had been consecrated for twelve years.*
(xiii) Daśaratha's Ins. (Nagārjuni Hill-cave)	दषलथेन देवानं पियेना आनंतलियं अभिसितेना आजीविकेहि···।	(This cave was given to the Ājīvikas by Daśaratha, Beloved of the gods, *immediately after his consecration.*

4. *The Mauryan System of Dating.*

(1) No regular and continuous era already founded is used; there is no reference to the Buddha Era or the Mahāvira Era.

(2) The inscriptions are dated in the regnal years of Aśoka. There is no refereuce to the Maurya Era supposed to be founded by Chandragupta Maurya.

(3) Dating is not independent; it is used as an adjectival phrase qualifying the agent, e. g., Aśoka.

(4) Only the number of regnal year is mentioned; no further details regarding season, month, fort-night date and day are given.

5. *Śuṅga Inscriptions.*

There are two representative inscriptions of the Śuṅga period—(1) the Barhut Buddhist Pillar Inscription[1] and (2) the Besnagar Garuḍa Pillar Inscription of the reign of Bhāga-bhadra.[2] In the first document only the reign of the Śuṅgas is mentioned :

Prakrit Text	*English Translation*
(i) सुगनं रजे ।	During the reign of the Śuṅgas

In the second document dating is more developed :

Prakrit Text	*English Translation*
(ii) कोसीपुत्रस भागभद्रस त्रातारस वसेन चतुदसेन राजेन वधमानस ।	In the fourteenth (regnal) years of prosperous Bhagabhadra, the Protector, the son of Kautsī (his mother).

In the first record the idea of dating is vague and inaccurate; it is confined to a period whlch spread over about one hundred and twelve years. The second record is more precise in dating. It went a step further than the Mauryan system of dating; here dating is independent, not an adjunct of the name of the king. But the system is still regnal; there is no use of a regular and continuous era.

6. *Āndhra-Śātavāhana Inscriptions :*

Some of the most important inscriptions issued under the Āndhra-Śātavāhana regime contain the following devices of dating :

Prakrit Texts	*English Translations.*
(i) सवछरे, १० + ८ वास-पखे २ दिवसे ।[3]	On the first day of the second fortnight of the season *Varṣā* (rains) in the year eighteenth (of Gautami-putra Śri-Śātakarṇi).

[1] Hultzsch, *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XIV, p. 138 f.

[2] Vogel, *Arch. Sur. Ind. Annual Report,* 1908-09.

[3] *Nasik Cave Inscription* of Gautamiputra śātakarṇī, *Ep. Ind.* Vol. IV, p. 104 f.

Prākrit Texts	*English Translations*
(ii) सवछरे २० + ४ गिंहान पखे २ दिवसे १० ।[1]	On the tenth day of the second fortnight of the season *Griṣma* (summer) in the year twenty-fourth (of Gautamiputra Śātakarṇi).
(iii) रञोवासिठिपुतस-सामि-सिरि- [पुलुमाविस] सवछरे सतमे ७ गिम्ह-पखे पचमे ५ दिवसे प्रथमे १ ।[2]	On the first day of the fifth fort-night of the season *Grīṣma* summer) *[=* Jyeṣṭha –Kṛṣṇa*]*, in the year seventh of king Vāsiṣthīpútra *Svāmī Śri* Pulumāvī.
(iv) ......सिरि--पुलुमायिस सवछरे एकुनवीसे १० + ९ गीम्हाण-पखे वितीये २ दिवसे तेरसे १० + ३ ।[3]	On the thirteenth day of the second fortnight of the season *Grīṣma* in the year nineteenth of Śri Pulumāvī.
(v) सिरि-पुलुमायिस सवछरे चतुविसे २० + ४ हेमंतान पखे ततिये ३ दिवसे वितिये २ ।[4]	On the second day of the third fortnight of the season Hemanta (winter)= [Pausa Kṛṣna, 2], in the year twentyforth of Sri Pulumāvī.
(vi) सिरि-यञ सातकणिस संवछरे सातमे ७ हेम-ताण पखे ततिये ३ दिवसे प्रथमे ।[5]	On the first day of the third fort-night of the season *Hemanta* (win-ter)=[Pauṣa Kṛṣṇa, 1] in the year seventh of Śri Yajñaśātakarṇī.
(vii) रञो सातवाहनानं सिरि-पुलुमाविस सव ८ हेम २ दिव१ ।[6]	On the first day of the second fort-night of the season Hemanta (winter) =*[Agrahāyaṇa* Śukla, 1*]* in the year eighth of the king Śātavāhana Śri Pulumāvi.

[1] Senart, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VIII, p. 73.
[2] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VII, p. 61 f, No. 14.
[3] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VIII, p. 60 ff, No. 2.
[4] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VII, p. 71, No. 20.
[5] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VIII, p. 94, No. 24.
[6] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIV, p. 155.

7. *The Characteristic of the System of Dating under the Āndhra-Śātavāhanas :*

(1) The regnal character of dating as prevailed during the Mauryra and the Śunga periods continued during the Āndhra Śātavāhana period also.

(2) The Āndhra-Śātavāhanas did not adopt or start any regular and continuous era.[1] Nowhere in their inscriptions the Śaka-Śālivāhana Era-is used.

(3) The early Śātavāhana inscriptions are undated; dating started fron the time of Gautamiputra Śātakarṇi, perhaps, due to the great importance of his reign.

(4) The word '*savachhara*' (*saṁvatsara*) is used for 'year', which later on became very popular; hitherto the word '*varṣa*' for 'year' was commonly used.

(5) Besides the regnal year of the ruler, the name of the season, the order of the *pakṣa* (fortnight) and the number of date are given in the details of dating.

(6) Numbers are very often given both in words and figures (see No. 5).

(7) The following abbreviations are used in some of the inscriptions :

(i) सव for सवछर (year)
(ii) गि for गिम्हाण (summar)
(iii) प for पक्ष (fortnight)
(iv) दिव for दिवस (day)
(v) हेम for हेमन्त (winter)

8. *The Hathigumpha Cave Inscription of Kāravela.*[2]

The following regnal years of Khāravela are used in this inscriptions :

(1) पधमे वसे	In the first year.
(2) दुतिये च वसे	And in the second year.
(3) ततिये पुन वसे	Again in the third year.
(4) तथा चवुथे वसे	And in the fourth year.
(5) पंचमे च दानी वसे	Now in the fifth year.

[1] They all used regnal years for dating their documents.
[2] See *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XX, p. 72 ff.

(6) छठे वसे	In the sixth year.
(7) सतमं च वसं पसासतो	Ruling in the seventh year.
(8) अठमे च वसे	And in the eighth year.
(9) नवमे च वसे	And in the ninth year.
(10) दसमे च वसे	And in the tenth year.
(11) एकादसमे च वसे	And in the eleventh year.
(12) बारसमे च वसे	And in the twelfth year.
(13) तेरसमे च वसे	And in the thirteenth year.

9. *Mauryan Era.*

In 1. 16 of the Hathigumpha inscriptions Pandit Bhagawanlal Indraji[1] and Sten Konow[2] read 'पनंतरिय सठ वस सते राज मुरिय काले' and translated it as 'in the year 165 of the Maurya Era' and propounded a theory that Chandragupta Maurya founded an Era which was current in Kaling during the time of Khāravela. This view was criticised by fleet who maintained that there was no reference to any era in this inscription and he suggested that the text referred to the restoration of some Jain works fallen into oblivion.[3] Lüder[4] and Smith[5] followed Fleet and rejected the reading proposed by Indraji and Konow. D.C. Sircar reads the passage in question, 'पानतरीय सत-सहसेहि। मुखिय-कल-वोच्छिनं [= वैदूर्यगर्भान् स्तम्भान् प्रतिष्ठापयति पञ्चोत्तर-शतसहस्त्रैः (मुद्राणां)। मुख्यकलावच्छिन्नं (= गीतनृत्यादिसमन्वितं)][6] There does not appear any reference to an era in this passage. Palæographically also the Hāthigumpha inscription cannot be placed in [321 B.C. (the starting point of the so-called Maurya Era) – 165 –] 156 B.C.; rather it belongs to the last quarter of the first century B.C. or to the beginning of the first century A. D. Moreover, no other instance of the epigraphical or literary use of the Maurya Era is found. Under the circumstances, there is no justification for holding the view that the Mauryas founded an era which was used after them.[7]

[1] *Hathigumpha* and three other inscriptions.
[2] *Arch. Sur. Ind. Report*, 1905-6.
[3] *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1910, pp. 243-244.
[4] *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. X, *List of Brahmi Ins.*, p. 161.
[5] *Early History of India*, p. 207, n. 2.
[6] *Select Inscriptions*, Vol. I, p. 210.
[7] R. D. Banerjee stuck to the reading of Indraji and Konow.

10. *The Inscriptions of the Śakas of South-West India (the Kṣaharātas of Mahārāṣṭra and the Mahākṣatrapas of Ujjayini).*

The following are a few illustrative specimens :

Texts	*English Translation*
(i) वसे ४०+२ वेसाख मासे ।[1]	In the month of *Vaiśakha* in the year fortysecond (of the Śaka Era).
(ii) वसे ४०+६ कतो ।[2]	(This pious gift was) made in the year fortysixth (of the Śaka Era).
(iii) वर्षे द्विपंचाशे ५०+२ फगुण बहुलस द्वितिय-वारे ।[3]	On the second day of the dark fortnight of the month *Phālguna* in the year fifty-second (of the Śaka Era).
(iv) महाक्षत्रयस्य...रुद्रदाम्नो वर्षे द्विसप्ततितमे ७०+२ मार्गशीर्ष-बहुल प्रति-पदि ।[4]	On the first day of the dark half of *Mārgaśīrṣa* in the seventy-second year (of the Śaka Era) during the reign of Mahākṣatrapa Rudradāman...
(v) रुद्रसीहस्य वर्षे त्रियुत्तर शते १००+३ वैसाख-शुद्धे पंचम-धण्यतिथौ रोहिणि नक्षत्र मूहूर्ते ।[5]	In the moment of the constellation Rohini on the fifth day of the bright fortnight of the month *Vaiśākha* in the one-hundred and third year (of the Saka Era) during the reign of Rudrasiṁha.
(vi) वर्षे १००+२०+७ भाद्रपद-बहुलस ५...... रुद्रसेनस्य इदं शान्यं ।[6]	This Stone-pillar of Rudrasena (was erected) on the fifth (day) of the dark fortnight of the month *Bhādrapada* in the one hundred and twenty-seventh year (of the Śaka Era).

[1] *Nasik Cave Inscription* of the reign of Nahapana. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VIII, p. 82 ff. No. 12.

[2] *Junnar Cave Inscription of the time of Nahapāna, Arch. Sur. W. India*, Vol. IV, p. 103.

[3] *Andhau Stone Insctiprions* of the time of Rudradāman, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. Vol. XVI, 23 ff.

[4] *Junagardh Rock Inscription* of Rudradaman I, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VIII, p. 42 ff.

[5] *Gauda Stone Inscription of the time of* Rudrasimha I, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVI, p. 235.

[6] *Garha Stone Inscription of* Rudrasena I, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVI, p. 238.

	Texts	*English Translation*
(vii)	श्रीधरवर्मणा······स्व-राज्याभिवृद्धिकरे वेज-यिके संवत्सरे त्रयोदशमे श्रावणबहुलस्य दशमी-पूर्वकमेतद्दिवसं········ २० + १ ।[1]	On this tenth day of the dark fortnight of the month *Śrāvaṇa* during the thirteenth victorious and prosperous (regnal) year (of Śridharavarman) in the two hundred and first year (of the Śaka Era).

11. *The Main Features of Dating.*

(1) The inscriptions are dated in a regular and continuous era, beginning from the year 42 to the year 201 of the same era.

(2) In the earlier inscriptions the system of dating is rather simple; in no. (i) only the year and the month are mentioned and in no. (ii) only the year is given.

(3) From the inscription no. (iii) dating is detailed. Instead of seasons mentioned in the Āndhra-Śātavāhana inscriptions we get the names of months, *Phālguna*, *Mārgaśīrṣa*, *Vaiśākha*, *Bhādrapada*, *Śrāvaṇa* etc.

(4) Instead of the numbers of fortnight in a particular season, as given in the Āndhra-Śātavāhana Inscriptions, two fortnights—(i) *bahula* (dark) and (2) *Śuddha* (bright) are mentioned in these inscriptions.

(5) A new word 'Vāra' for 'day' is used in some of the inscriptions.

(6) In some of the inscriptions *nakṣatra* (constellation) and *muhūrta* (moment) are also given.

(7) In some of the inscriptions the continuous era used for dating is vaguely linked up with the reign of the rulers.

(8) In the inscription No. (vii) both regnal era with its adjuncts (which were carried on to the Gupta period) and the continuous era are given.

[1] *Kanakhera Stone Inscription of* Śridharavarman, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVI, p. 232.

12. *The Era Used: The Śaka Era.*

Now the question is: what is the era used in these inscriptions? Obviously it was not an Indian era. The contemporaries of the Kṣaharātas and the Kṣattrapas, the Āndhra-Śātavāhanas, dated their inscriptions in their regnal years; they did not use any regular and continuous era. They would not use the Kṛta Era founded by the Mālavas of Avanti whom they defeated and replaced for the same reason as the Muslims would not use the Vikrama Era or the Śaka Era in India. Under the circumstances, the conclusion is irresistible that the Śakas of Mahārāṣṭra, Khatiawar, and Avanti adopted their own era, though they followed the details of the system of Indian dating. Now the next question is: who was responsible for the foundation of the Śaka Era? On this point the Jain tradition in India is quite clear. In the *Kālakāchārya-Kathā* given in the *Prabhāvaka-charita* it is distinctly stated that the Śakas founded their own era, having killed a descendant of that Rāia (Vikrāmaditya), one hundred and thirty-five years after Vikramāditya accession to power.[1] By calculation this event took place in (57 B.C.+135=) 78 A.D. As the era was founded at Avanti Chāṣṭana was evidently the founder of this era. According to the Junagadh Rock Inscription of Rudradāman,[2] his grandfather Chāṣṭana was the first *Mahākṣatrapa* of his dynasty and and he had every justification for starting a new era. As the Śaka dynasty of Avanti was the most powerful and famous in S.W. India, the neighbouring Śaka dynasty of Mahāraṣṭra adopted the era started by the former.

During the early centuries of this era the word 'Śaka' is not found associated, with it. The words used are, generally '*varśe*' and, rarely '*saṁvatsare*' both meaning 'in the year'. In the inscriptions ranging from Śaka Era 500 to 1262 we get the following phrases to indicate its connection with the Śakas:

[1] शकानां वंशमुच्छेद्य कालेन कियताऽपि ह ।
राजा श्री विक्रमादित्यः सार्वं भौमोपमोऽभवत् ॥९०
ततो वर्षशते पंचत्रिंशता साधिके पुनः ।
तस्य राज्ञो अन्वयं हत्वा वत्सरः स्थापितः शकैः ॥९२

[2] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 42 ff.

(i) शकनृपतिराज्याभिषेक संवत्सर[1]	(the era of the coronation of the Śaka king)
(ii) शकनृपतिसंवत्सर[2]	(The era of the Śake king)
(iii) शकनृपसंवत्सर[3]	(the era of the Śake king)
(iv) शकनृपकाल[4]	(the time [=era] of the Śaka king
(v) शक–संवत्[5]	(the Śake era)
(vi) शक[6]	(the Śake [er a])
(vii) शाक[7]	(the era [derived from the Śake king])

From the above-quoted extracts it is evident that up to the twelfth cetnury A. D. the Śaka Era was regarded as founded by some Śaka king and the word 'Śālivāhana' was not associated with it. It was only later that the era came to be called Śālivāhana-Śaka or Śaka-Śālivāhana. The earliest documents-literary and epigraphical-with the dating of which the name of Śālivāhana is associated, belong to the fourteenth century.[8] The reason why the name of Śālivāhana was associated with the Śaka era appears to be this. In northern India the era, which was originally called 'Kṛta' and subsequently 'Mālava', came to be called 'Vikrama Era' due to the changes in the political psychology of the people. In the South the word 'Śaka', which

[1] शकनृपतिराज्याभिषेकसंवत्सरेष्वतिक्रान्तेषु पञ्चसु शतेषु ।
Ind. Ant. Vol. X, p. 58.

[2] शकनृपति-संवत्सरेषु चतुस्त्रिंशाधिकेषु पञ्चस्वतीतेषु ।
Ind., Ant. Vol. VI, p. 73.

[3] शकनृप-संवत्सरेषु शर-शिखि-मुनिषु व्यतीतेषु । *Ind., Ant.*, Vol. XII, p. 16.

[4] शकनृपकालातीतसंवत्सरशतेषु सप्तसु षोडशोत्तरेषु ।
Ep. Ind., Vol. III, p. 109

[5] शक संवत् ८३२ *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. I, p. 56.

[6] शक ११५७ Keilhorn, *L. I, S. I.*, p. 63 No. 348.

[7] शाके ११२८ प्रभव संवत्सरे । *Ep.* Vol. I, p. 343.

[8] The *Kalpa-pradipa* of Jinaprabhasuri. The work is assignable to C. 1300 A.D. The author says that Śātavāhana (Śālivāhana) of Pratiṣthana, after defeating Vikramaditya of Ujjayini, started his own era. See *J.A.S.B.B*, Vol. X, p. 132-33; नृपशालिवाहन शक १२७६ ; The Harihara gaon inscription of the Yādava king Bukkaraya of Vijayanagara (Keilhorn, *Literary Inscription of South India*, p. 78, No. 455),

was an adjective of 'era' in the phrases. '*Śaka-nṛpati-rajyābhiṣeka-saṁvatsara*', '*Śaka--nṛpa-kāla*', '*Śaka-saṁvat*', *Śaka-kāla*' etc.; in course of time came to denote 'year' itself and the political consciousness that once one part of India was dominated by the Śakas disappeared. From among historical personalities the only name that survived in theDeccan was that of Śālivāhana[1] (equally applicable to Hāla or Gautamiputra Śātakarṇi) which could catch the imagination of the literateurs and the people. Under the circumstances, on the pattern of the North, the name of Śālivāhana came to be associated with the Śaka Era, which made this era respectable not only in the south but all over India.

13. *The Inscriptions of the Indo-Bactrians.*

Very few inscriptions (except on coins) of the Indo-Bactrians, have been discovered and seldom dated. Only two specimens are given below :

	Texts	*English Translation.*
(i)	······मिनेन्द्रि महरजस कटिअस दिवस ४+४ +४+१+१ ।[2]	On the fourteenth day of the month *Kārtika* in the reign of the great king Menander.
(ii)	वषये पंचमये ४+१ वेश्रखस मसस दिवस पंचविश्रये ।[3]	On the twenty-fifth day of the month *Vaiśākha* in the fifth year (during the reign of Menander).

14. *Era, whether Regnal or Continuous.*

The year used in the above-mentioned inscription is obviously regnal. Menander was Greek by nationality and Buddhist by religion. But the year used by him cannot be assigned either to the Seleucidian Era founded by Seleukos in 312 B.C. or to the Buddha Era which started from 483 B.C., even if the figures representing hundreds are dropped. The months used here are purely Indian *Kārtika* and *Vaiśākha*

[1] According to the *Prabanadha-chintamāni* (p. 28) 'Śālivāhana' is one of the names of Hala : शालिवाहन-शालवाहन-सालवाहण-सालवाहन-सालाहण-सातवाहन-हालेत्येकस्य नामानि ।

[2] *Shinkot Steatite Casket Inscriptions* of the regin of Menander, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 7 ; the year mentioned in the beginning has disappeared.

[3] *Ibid.*

and not Macedonian or Greek ones, some of which are used in the inscriptions issued under the reigns of the Śakas and the Kuṣaṇas. This fact makes the possibility of the use of a Greek or Seleucidian Era all the more remote.

15. *The Inscriptions of the Śaka-Pahlavas (Scytho-Parthians) of N. W. India :*

	Texts	*English Translation*
(i)	स्वामिस महाक्षत्रपस शोडासस संवत्सरे ७० + २ हेमंत मासे २ दिवसे ९ ।[1]	On the ninth day of the second month of the season *Hemant* (*Pauṣa*) in the year 72 during the reign of *Svāmi Mahākṣatrapa* Śoḍāsā.
(ii)	संवत्सरये अठसततिमये २० + २० + २० + १० + ४ + ४ महरयस महं-तस मोगस पनेमस मसस दिवसे पंचमे ४ + १ ।[2]	On the fifth day of the Greek month *Panemos* during the reign of *Mahārāja* Mahan (the Greek king) Maues in the year 78.
(iii)	महरयस गुदुव्हरस वस २० + ४ + १ + १ संव-त्सरये तिशतिमये १०० + १ + १ + १ वेशखस मसस दिवसे प्रठमे पुत्रे वहले पक्षे ।[3]	On the meritorious first day of the dark fortnight of the month *Vaiśākha* in the year 103 (of an unknown era) during the 26th regnal year of Gondopharnes.
(iv)	सं० १ × १०० + २० + १ + १ श्रवणस मसस दि प्रढमे १ महरयस गुषणस रजमि ।[4]	On the first day of the month Śrāvaṇa in the year 122 (of an unknown era) during the reign of *Mahārāja* Kuṣaṇa.
(v)	संवत्सरये १ × १०० + २० + १० + ४ अजस श्रवणस मसस दिवसे त्रेविशे २० + १ + १ ।[5]	On the twenty-third day of the first *Śrāvāṇa* (or of the month *Śravāṇa* during the reign of Azes) in the year 134 (of an unknown era).

[1] *Mathura Votive Tablet of the reign of* Śoḍāsa, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. II, p. 199.

[2] *Taxila Copper-plate Inscription of* Paṭika, Konow, *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. II, i. p. 28.

[3] *Takht-i-Bahi Stone Inscription* of Gondopharnes, Sten Konow, *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. II, I, p. 62.

[4] *Panjtar Stone Inscription* of a Kuṣaṇa king, Sten Konow, *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, II, i, p. 70.

[5] *Kalawan Copper-plate Inscription*, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXI, p. 259.

(vi)	स १×१००+२०+ १०+४+१+१ अयस अषडस मसस दिवसे १०+४+१ ।[1]	On the fifteenth day of the month of the first Āśāḍha in the year 136 (of an unknown era).
(vii)	सं० १×१००+२०+ २०+२०+२०+४+ १+१+१ महरजस उवमिकस्तु सस ।[2]	In the year 187 (of an unknown era) during the reign of *Mahārāja* Uvimikastusa.
(viii)	क १×१००+२०+ २०+२०+२०+ १० +१ महरजस······स पुत्रस जिहोणिकस चुख्सस क्षत्रपस ।[3]	In the year 191 (of an unknown era) during the reign of Jihoṇika, the *Kṣatrapa* of Chukṣa, the son of *Mahārāja*.........

16. *The System of Dating followed in the Scythio-Parthian Inscriptions :*

(1) A regular era is used in these inscriptions from the year 72[4] to the year 191 of the same.

(2) With the regular and continous era the reign of the king or governor is also mentioned, generally without mentioning the regnal year.

(3) In some cases the regnal year is also mentioned.

(4) The number of year and the number of days are ordinarily mentioned in figures, but very often in figures and words both. Generally the names of seasons and month are given. Sometimes we come across Macedonian months, obviously used by foreign donors, in place of Indian ones.

(5) Some times the fortnight of the month is also given.

(6) Some times only the number of year and the name of reigning king alone are mentioned; others details are dropped.

1 *Taxila Silver Scroll Inscription* of a Kuṣaṇa king, Sten Konow, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIV, p. 295.

2 *Khalste Stone Inscription* of Uvimikostusa, Sten Konow, *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. II, i, p. 81.

3 *Taxila Silver Vase Inscription* of Jihoṇika, Ibid, p. 82

4 The earliest Kharosthi inscription is the Maiva inscription dated 58.

(7) Abbreviation स or सं for संवत्सर, दि for दिवस, क for काल are used.

(8) The order of the different constituents of dating is not fixed as yet.

(9) Obviously the system is earlier and less developed than the system followed by the Śātavāhanas and the Śakas of S. W. India.

17. *An Early Śaka Era.*

To which era should the years mentioned in the above quoted inscriptions be referred? Before answering this question one fact should be borne in mind. The entire group of these inscriptions, on the basis of palæography and style, can be assigned to the pre-Kuṣaṇa age and also to the period before the Kṣaharāta-Śakas of S.W. India and the imperial Āndhra-Śātavāhanas, whose inscriptions are found in the Western Ghats. These years cannot be referred to the Śaka Era started faom 78 A.D. or to the era founded by Kaniṣka c. 120 A.D., because in both the cases the rule of the Scythian kings mentioned in these inscriptions will fall during the Kuṣaṇa and the post-Kuṣaṇa periods of Indian history, which is impossible. Nor these years can be referred to the Maurya (c. 321 B.C.), the Seleucidian (c. 312 B.C.), the old Śaka (c. 550 B.C.) or the old Parthian (c. 259 or 249 B.C.) era, because in this case the Śakas would become contemporary of the later Mauryas, the Śuṅgas and the Bactrians in India, which will militate against the well-established sequence in Indian history.

From the earliest date (58) used in the early Scythian inscriptions it can be inferred that the Scythians invaded India not long before that date. Obviously the era in question was founded by the Śakas to commemorate their first invasion of India. According to the Jain paṭṭāvalis and the *Kālakāchārya-kathā* given in the *Prabhāvakacharita* Vikramāditya drove the Śakas out of Avanti after they had ruled over the latter for fourteen or four years. Thus the first invasion of India by the Śakas can be assigned to c. 57 plus 14 or 4=71 or 61 B.C.

The victory of the Śakas in 71 or 61 B.C. occasioned the foundation of an area which can be called an Early Śaka Era. In their first attempt of conquering India the Śakas lost their ground in Avanti but a branch of them survived in N.W. India and continued to use the Śaka era founded in 71 or 61 B.C. The year 191 of this era marks the end of the reign of Wima Kadphises and the beginning of the reign of Kaniṣka in c. 71 B.C.+191=120 A.D. When the Śakas, under the leadership of Chāṣṭana, occupied Avanti for the second time they founded the latest Śaka Era in 78 A.D.. which was used by the Śakas of S.W. India and later on adopted by the Indians.

18. The Kuṣaṇa Inscriptions From the Reign of Kaniṣka.

Kaniṣka founded an era and this started an independent system of dating. A new specimens of inscriptions following this system are given below:

Texts	*English Translation*
(i) महाराजस्य कणिष्कस्य सं० ३ हे ३ दिवस २२।[1]	On the twenty-second day of the third fortnight of the season *Hemanta* in the year 3 of *Mahārāja* Kaniṣka.
(ii) महराजस्य देवपुत्रस्य काणिष्कस्य सवत्सरे १० ग्रि २ दि ९।[2]	On the ninth day of the second fortnight of the season *Grīṣma* (summer) in the year 10 of *Mahārāja Devaputra* Kaniṣka.
(iii) महरजस्य रजतिरजस्य देवपुत्रस्य कनिष्कस्य संवत्सरे एकदशे सं० १०+१ दइसिकस्य मसस दिवसे अठविशे दि २०+४+४।[3]	On the twenty-eighth day of the month *Ddisios (—Jyaiṣṭha)* in the year 11 of Kaniṣka, the great king, the lord of kings, the son of gods.

[1] *Saranath Buddhist Image Inscription* of Kaniṣka, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VIII, p. 173 ff.

[2] *British Museum Stone Inscription* of Kaniṣka I, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, p. 240.

[3] *Sri Vihar Copper-plate Inscription* of Kaniṣka I, Sten Konow, *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. II, i, p. 141.

(iv)	सं० १०+१ अषडस्य मसस दि २० उत्तरफगुणे ···कणिष्कस्य रजमि ।[1]	On the twentieth day of the month *Aśāḍha* and the constellation *Uttarā-phālgunī* in the year 11 during the reign of Kaniṣka.
(v)	सं० १० + ४ + ४ कर्तियस मसस दिवसे २०············महरजस कणेष्कस्य ।[2]	On the twentieth day of the month *Kārtika* in the year 18···during the regin of Kaniṣka.
(vi)	महाराजस्य राजातिराजस्य देवपुत्रस्य षाहि वासिष्कस्य सं० २०+८ हे १ दि ५ ।[3]	On the fifth day of the first fortnight of the season *Hemanta* in the year 28 of the Kaniṣka era during the reign of *Śāhi* Vāsiṣka, the great king, the lord of kings, the son of gods.
(vii)	संवत्सरे २०+८ गुर्प्पिये दिवसे[1] ·····देवपुत्रस्य षाहिस्य हुविष्कस्य ।[4]	On the first day of the (Great) month *Gorpois (=Bhādrapada)* in the year 28 of the Kaniṣka era (during the reign of Huviṣka),
(viii)	महारजस्य देवपुत्रस्य हुविष्कस्य सं० ३०+३ गृ १ दि ८ ।[5]	On the eighth day of the first fortnight of the season *Grīṣma* (summer) in the year 33 of the Kaniṣka era during the reign of Huviṣka, the great king, the son of gods.
(ix)	महरजस रजतिरजस देवपुत्रस कइसरस वझिष्पपुत्रस कनिष्कस संवत्सरये एकचपरिशये सं० २०+२०+१ जेठस मसस दिवसे १ ।[6]	On the first day of the month *Jyaiṣṭha* in the year 41 of the Kaniṣka era during the reign of Kaniṣka (II), the son of Vaseṣka, the Kaiser, the great king, the lord of kings, the son of gods.

[1] *Zeda Ins. of Kaniṣka I, Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIX, p. 1 ff.

[2] *Manikiala Stone Inscription* of Kaniṣka I, Sten Konow, *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. II, i, p. 1 49 f.

[3] *Sānchi Buddhist Image Inscription* of Vāsiṣka, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. II, pp. 369-70.

[4] *Mathura Stone Inscription* of Huviska, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXI, p. 60 f.

[5] *Mathura Buddhist Image Inscription* of Huviska, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VIII, p. 181.

[6] *Ara Stone Inscription* of Kaniṣka II, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIV, p. 143.

(x)	महाराजस्य हुविक्षस्य सवंचर ४०+८ व २ दि १०+९ ।[1]	On the nineteenth day of the second month of the season *Varṣā* (=*Bhadrapada*) in the year 48 of the Kaniṣka era during the reign of *Mahārāja* Huviṣka
(xi)	महरजस्य वासुदेवस्‌ यस ८० हम व १ दि १०+२ ।[2]	On the twelfth day of the first dark fortnight of the season *Hemanta* (winter) in the year 80 of the Kaniṣka era during the reign of *Mahārāja* Vāsudeva.

19. *The main features of dating in the Kaniṣka–group Kuṣaṇa inscriptions :*

(1) There is a continuous era used from the year 3 falling in the reign of Kaniṣka I up to the year 80 during the reign of Vāsudeva.

(2) It appears that Kaniṣka used his regnal years for dating, which was continued by his successors. This resulted into a regular era.

(3) In the majority of inscriptions dating consists of (i) the name of the reigning king, (ii) the number of year preceded by the word '*saṁvatsara*', (iii) the name of season or the month (sometimes Greek months are given) and (iv) the number of day in the month.

(4) In a few inscriptions constellations are also mentioned.

(5) In some inscriptions the name of the king with political titles comes after the details of dating.

(6) The System of dating is similar to that followed in the inscriptions of the Āndhra-Śātavāhanas and the Śakas of S. W. India.

20. *The Foundation and the Identification of the Kaniṣka Era.*

The year third of the era falling in the reign of Kaniṣka suggests that he founded the era by replacing the Kadphises

[1] *Lucknow Museum Jain Image Inscription* of Huviṣka, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. X, p. 112.

[2] *Mathura Image Ins.* of Vāsudeva, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. I, p. 392, No. 24.

group of kings and by establishing a new line of rulers in c. 120 A.D. In utter disregard of Indian traditions Western scholars identified the era founded by Kaniṣka first with the Vikrama Era founded in 57 B. C. and then with the Śaka Era started from 78 A. D. Now these identifications have been given up, specially in view of the fact that the era founded by Kaniṣka died in its own home in N. W. after brief career of about 100 years and it was again replaced by the Early Śaka Era founded in c. 71 B. C. in which were dated the inscriptions from 303 to 399. The Early Śaka Era in the North, however, was replaced by the Mālava and the Gupta Eras.

21. *The Inscriptions of the Republics and other Peoples and Kingdoms of Rajasthana and Avanti-Ākara (Madhya-Bharata).*

Some most representative instances are given below:

	Texts	*English Translations.*
(i)	कृतयोर्द्वयो-र्वर्षशतयोर्द्वच शीतयोः २००+८०+ २ चैत्र पूर्णमास्याम् ।[1]	On the full moon day of the month *Chaitra* in the year 282 of the Kṛta Era.
(ii)	कृते हि (कृतैः) २०० +८०+४ चैत्र शुक्ल पक्षस्य पञ्चदशी ।[2]	On the fifteenth day of the bright half of the month *Chaitra* in the year 284 of the Kṛta Era.
(iii)	क्रिते (कृते) हि २००+ ९०+५ फाल्गुण (न) शुक्लस्य पञ्चे दि ।[3]	On the fifth day of the bright half of the month *Phālguna* in the year 295 of the Kṛta Era.
(iv)	कृते हि ३००+३०+ ५ जरा (ज्येष्ठ) शुद्धस्य पञ्चदशी ।[4]	On the fifteenth day of the bright half of the month *Jyeṣtha* in the year 335 of the Kṛta Era.
(v)	कृतेषु चतुर्षु वर्षशते- ष्वष्टाविंशेषु ४००+ २०+८ फाल्गुण (न) वहुलस्य पञ्चदश्याम् ।[5]	On the fifteenth day of the dark fortnight of the month *Phālguna* in the year 428 of the Kṛta Era.

[1] *Nandsa Yupa Inscription, Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXVII.

[2] *Barnala Inscription.*

[3] *Badva Yupa Inscription, Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIII, p. 52.

[4] *Barnala Inscription.*

[5] *Vijaigadha Inscription.*

(vi)	श्रीमालवगणाम्नाते प्रशस्ते कृतसंज्ञितै- कषटचधिके प्राप्ते समाशतचतुष्टये । दिने आश्वोज शुक्लस्य पंचम्यामथ सत्कृते ।[1]	On the auspicious fifth day of the bright half of the month *Āśvina* in the year 461 of the Kṛta Era traditionally used by the Mālavas.
(vii)	मालवानां गणस्थित्या याते शतचतुष्टये । त्रिनवत्यधिकेऽब्दानामृतौ सेव्यघनस्तने ॥ सहस्यमास शुक्लस्य प्रशस्तेऽह्नि त्रयोदशें ।[2]	On the thirteenth day of the bright half of the month *Pauṣa* when 493 years had elapsed from the foundation of the Mālavagaṇa.
(viii)	पञ्चसु शतेषु शरदां यातेष्वेकान्नवतिसहितेषु । मालवगणस्थितिवशा- त्कालज्ञानाय लिखतेषु ॥ यस्मिन्…………… कुसुमसमयमासे ।[3]	'Five hundred autumns, together with ninety less by one, having elapsed from the foundation of the Mālava-gaṇa (Mālava Republic), and being written down for the knowledge of time in the season *Vasanta* (spring).
(ix)	संवत्सरशतैः यातैः सपञ्चनवत्यर्गलैः सप्तभिर्मालवेशानां ।[4]	In the year 795 of the Mālava lords.
(x)	वसुनवाष्टौ वर्षागतस्य कालस्य विक्रमाख्यस्य वैशाखस्य सितायां रविवारयुत द्वितीयां चन्द्रे रोहिणिसंयुक्ते लग्ने सिंहस्य शोभने योगे ।[5]	Eight (vasu) hundred and ninety eight years according to the era known as Vikrama-kāla, on the second day of the bright half of the month *Vaiśākha*, falling on Sunday, when the moon was on the Rohiṇī constellation and in the auspicious *Siṁha-yoga*.

[1] *Mandasor Inscription*, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XII, p. 320.

[2] *Mandasor Inscription of* Kumārgupta and Bandhu-varman, Fleet, *Crop. Ins.* Vol. III, p. 81 ff.

[3] *Mandasor Inscription of* Yaśodhaman alias Viṣṇuvardhana, Fleet, *Crop, Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 192 ff.

[4] *Kaṇasva Inscription of* Sivagaṇa, *Ind.*, *Ant.* Vol. XIX, p. 59.

[5] *Dhaulapur Inscription of* Chaṇḍamahāsena.

(xi)	मालव कालाच्छरदां षट्त्रिंशत्-संयुतेष्वतीतेषु नवसु शतेषु मधाविह ।[1]	When nine hundred years together with thirty-six, according to the Mālava-kāla (Era) had passed, in the season Madhu (spring).
(xii)	रामगिरिनन्द कलिते विक्रमकाले गते तु शुचिमासे ।[2]	When nine (*nanda*) hundred and seven (*giri*) ty-three (Rama) years of the Vikrama Era had elapsed, in the pure month (Jyeṣṭha or Āṣāḍha).
(xiii)	विक्रम संवत्सर ११०३ फाल्गुण (न) शुक्लपक्ष तृतीया ।[3]	On the third day of the bright half of the month Phalguna in the year 1103 of the Vikrama Era.

22. *The System of Dating.*

(1) There is a regular and continuous era used from the year 282 to the year 1103 and onwards.

(2) The same era is called Kṛta, Mālava and Vikrama in the succesive periods.

(3) The three eras named above are co-eval and identical.

(4) In actual dating in early inscriptions first the name of the era, then the number of the year, next month fortnight and date are mentioned; in some of the later inscriptions week-days, constellations and *yogas* are also given.

(5) In some of the later and metrical inscriptions the above order is changed; fiirst the number of year, then the name of the era and next date, month, season etc. are given.

(6) From the ninth century onwards in some of the inscriptions the number of year is represented by words symbolising numbers (see Nos. x, xii).

23. *The Origin and Identity of the Kṛta, the Mālava and the Vikrama Eras.*[4]

On the ground of astronomical calculation and regional considerations emiennt scholars have come to the conclusion

[1] *Gyaraspur Inscription.*

[2] *Bijapur Inscription of* Rāṣṭrakūṭa Vidagdharāja.

[3] *Osia* (Jodhpur State) *Inscription.*

[4] This section has been adopted from the author's another work, *Vikramāditya of Ujjayini*, pp. 5-9.

that the Kṛta era, the Mālava era and the Vikrama era are co-eval and identical, all the three starting from 57 B.C.[1] when the identity of these eras is established, it becomes, quite clear that the era founded by Vikramādity has been current during the past twenty centuries. But a very cogent question may be advanced: If the founder of the era was Vikramāditya, why is it not named after him during its early career and it is first called as the Kṛta era and then it is known as the era of the Mālava people or republic or Mālava lords and lately it is designated as Vikrama era? The question is, however, capable of an easy solution which can be explained as follows:

The Early Omission of the Name 'Vikrama' Explvined.

Vikramāditya was the leader of a republic (*gaṇamukhya*) and not an obsolute monarch.[2] Though he was mainly instrumental in the foundation of the era, he could not claim the sole credit for it. In a republican type of state the *gaṇa* (the congregation of people) is more important than the individual leader howsoever influential he might be. Great achievements, like success in a war, were shared by the entire *gaṇa* (republic), as there was a fear of dissension, in case one single individual aspired to claim them. Under circumstances, the era was to be named after the Mālava-gaṇa (of which Vikramāditya was the leader). The era was started to commemorate the victory of the Mālava Republic against the barbarous Śakas whose expulsion from India freed the country from foreign invasion and inaugurated an era of peace and prosperity, which, figuratively, might be regarded as *Kṛtayuga* (Golden Age). So, the era was first significantly called as Kṛta. Kṛta is not only a chronological division of time in Hindu astronomy but also a conceptual term denoting a virtuous and happy age. This is borne out by a verse found in the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*. The verse can be translated thus: 'The sleeping is *Kali*; the yawning is *Dvāpara*; the standing is *Tretā* and the marching

[1] Dr. A. S. Altekar, *Sahyādri*, October, 1943; *Nāgri-Prachārini Patrikā*, Vikramāṅika, samvat 2000.

[2] Raj Bali Pandey, *Vikramāditya of Ujjayini*, Chapters VI & VIII.

onward is *Kṛta*.[1] The era, when the people of India under the leadership of the Mālava-gaṇa were up and marching in the defence of their country against their enemies and were enjoying the fruits of their success, can aptly be called Kṛta.

India, free from foreign invasion, enjoyed peace and prosperity for 135 years from 57 B.C. (when the era was founded) to 78 A.D. At the end of this period the Śakas again started their invasions and in the absence of an able leadership in the country they occupied the whole of Sindhu, Surāṣṭra and Avanti. But though the territories of Avanti were lost to the Mālavas, they survived the catastrophe as a people and cherished for a few centuries more the hope of regaining Avanti and re-establishing the *Kṛta-yuga* (Golden Age) once again. They shifted to the north-east of Avanti, carved out a new Mālava territory[2] and the era founded in 57 B.C. was still called Kṛta. They continued their struggle with the Śakas, but owing to the disintegration of their power they were not able to restore their lost territories and prestige. This rendered a rude shock to their dream of the Kṛtayuga. The name *Kṛta* was dropped from the era. But, as the Mālava-gaṇa was alive, the era was still remembered as to commemorate the firm foundation of the Mālava republic in 57 B.C. when the Śakas were defeated. It came to be called the Mālava era the era of the Mālava-gaṇa, the Mālava people and the Mālava lords.

From the fourth and the fifth centuries of the Christian era there was a new development in Indian history, which was eventually responsible for the change of the name of the era from the Mālava era to the Vikrama era. When the Gupta power was rising in the first half of the fourth century the Mālavas were still a powerful republie beyond the west-south horizon of the Gupta kingdom. They head the list of a number of republics whom the great conqueror Samudragupta subjugated

[1] कलिः शयानो भवति संजिहानस्तु द्वापरः ।
उत्तिष्ठंस्त्रेता भवति कृतं संपद्यते चरन् ॥ VII. 15.

[2] महता स्वशक्तिगुरुणा पौरुषेण प्रथम चन्द्र दर्शन (मिव) मालवगण विषयमवतारयित्वा
Nandsa Yupa Inscription, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXVII.

but spared them as subordinate allies.[1] The next ambitious king Chandragupta Vikramāditya adopted a sterner attitude towards these republics. He annexed and finally exterminated them. They are no longer heard of from this time. The Gupta empire engulfed them and spread over Mālava, Rajputana and Central India. The Guptas had their own era starting from 319-20 A.D. But the ideal of freedom, for which the Mālavas stood still possessed the mind of people in Mālava, and Rajputana areas. They continued to use the Mālava era inspite of the Gupta rule and even the great Gupta emperor Kumāragupta was compelled to recognize the Mālava era in those areas. The Hūṇas destroyed the Gupta empire in the sixth century A.D. and the hope of the Kṛta-yuga was altogether lost by the Indians. The Guptas were soon forgotten by them, but the Mālavas lingered in their memory, as their history had a greater vitality of survival in their political ideal of freedom from foreign domination, their sacrifices and tribulation in this cause and in the towering personality of their leader Vikramāditya. The era of the Mālavas overlived Gupta imperialism and continued in the name of the Mālava-gaṇa, the Mālava people and the Mālava lords.

By the eighth and the ninth centuries A.D. absolute monarchy, with all its implications, became an established institution in India. The very conception of a republican state passed beyond the horizon of the mind of the Indians. In the last decade of the ninth century the Mālava-gaṇa was entirely merged into the luminous personality of Vikramāditya, whose memory was still enshrined in the popular mind, and the era was called after him. Vikramāditya himself came to be regarded as a king and the era was some times called the era of the king Vikrama or Vikramāditya. This transference from republicanism to monarchism in popular mind is not unique in India. Who, except a few learned scholars, knows to-day that Lord Kṛṣhṇa was a republican leader and the father of Lord Buddha was the chief of a republic ?

[1] मालवार्जुनायन-यौधेय-माद्रकाभीर-प्रार्जुन-सनकानीक-काकखरपरिकादि ।
Fleet: *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 1-27.

The omission of the Vikrama era in the astronomical works is capable of an easy explanation. Though the Śakas were repelled in their first attempt of invading India, they renewed their invasion in about 78 A.D. They conquered Avanti and made Ujjayini their capital. We also know from the Jain work *Prabhāvaka-Charita* that they started the Śaka era in 78 A.D. In those days Ujjayini was a great seat of learning and a centre of astronomical researches. Astronomers, like other erudites, flocked to this city even under the Śakas. The Mālavas were dislodged from Avanti and pushed towards north-east and the city of Ujjayini was compelled to discontinue the era founded by the Mālavas and was forced to adopt the era started by the Śakas. During the long period of about three hundred years, when the Śakas were ruling over Avanti and Surāṣṭra, the Mālava era had hardly any chance of revival at Ujjayini. The astronomers used the official Śaka era. In the beginning they did so under compulsion. Later on it became fashionable and habitual. Further, some sanctity was attached to the Śaka era when it came to be associated with 'Śālivāhana which made it more popular than before. The Guptas conquered and ruled over Avanti for about a century and a half. The official era of the Gupta was their own. But the astronomers who had became conservative by this time and were psychologically reconciled to the Śaka-Śālivāhana era, persisted in its use and would not adopt the Gupta era. When the power of the Guptas disappeared, the Mālava era was still current, but the astronomers would not change the mode of their dating. Such was the case not only in Central India and the Deccan where the Śaka era became widely current and popular, but also in northern India where the Vikrama era assumed its present name and became universal. Astronomers and astrologers date their compositions in the Śaka era as late as the ninteenth century A.D. It was mainly due to their reconciliation to the Śaka-Śālivāhana era and partly due to the lack of proper political perspective in them.[1]

[1] For the history of individual Indian astronomers from Āryabhatta to Govinda Shastri, see the *Gaṇakataraṅginī* of Sudhakara Dvivedi, Banaras.

The Starting Point of the Vikrama Era.

We can get the starting point of the Vikrama Era by collating the Kali, the Vikrama and the Christian eras. In the current year these eras have the following years:

Kali Era 5052
Vikrama Era 2008-9
Christian Era 1952

Thus the Vikrama Era started in (5052−2008=) 3044, Kali Era and (2009−1952=) 57 B.C. By adding 135 years to the Śaka Era we get the Vikrama Era (1873+135=) 2008. The year of the Vikrama Era starts in Nothern India from the first day of the bright half of the month *Chaitra*, but in Gujrat and South from the first day of the bright half of the month *Kārtika*. The Vikrama year in the north is *pūrṇimānta* (ending on full-moon day 15) while in the south it is *amānta* (ending on dark 30 of the month). The Vikrama Era is current all over Northern India except in Bengal where Fasli Era (a modified form of Hijri Era) has been adopted. The era is used in Surāṣṭra and Āndhra also.

24. *The Inscriptions of the Guptas, their Contemporaries and their Successors.*

Curiously enough the most important official-Gupta document, the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta, is not dated. The first three members of the Gupta dynasty did not leave any record, dated or undated. Two dated inscriptions of Samudragupta have been discovered, but they have been proved as spurious and they belong to a date much later than that of Samudragupta. Dated inscriptions are found from the reign of Chandragupta II.

Texts	*English Translation.*
(i) श्रीचन्द्रगुप्तस्य विजय-राज्य-संवत्सरे पंचमे ५ कालानुवर्तमान- संवत्सरे एक षष्ठे (एक षष्ठितमे) [आषाढ़ मासे] प्रथमे शुक्लदिवसे पंचम्यां ।[1]	On the fifth day of the bright half of the month first *Āśāḍha* in the year 61 of the era traditionally current during the fifth victorious regnal year of Śri-Chandragupta.

[1] *Mathura Pillar Inscription of* Chandragupta II, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXI, p. 8 f.

(ii) संवत्सरे ८०+२ आषाढ मास शुक्लैकादश्याम् ।[1]	On the eleventh day of the bright half of the month *Āśāḍha* in the year 82 (of the Gupta Era).
(iii) सं० ९०+३ भाद्रपद दि० ४ ।[2]	On the fourth day of the month *Bhādrapada*, in the year 93 (of the Gupta Era).
(iv) संवत्सर-शते त्रयोदशोत्तरे १००+१०+३...।[3]	......in the year thirteenth added to one hundred (of the Gupta Era).
(v) श्री कुमारगुप्तस्य विजय राज्य-संवत्सरशते सप्तदशोत्तरे कार्तिकमास दशम दिवसे ।[4]	On the tenth day of the month *Kārtika* in the year seventeen added to one hundred (of the Gupta Era), during the victorious reign of Śri Kumāragupta.
(vi) सम्व (संव) १००+२०+४ फाल्गुन (न) दि० ७ परम-दैवत-भट्टारक महाराजाधिराज श्रीकुमारगुप्ते पृथिविपतौ ।[5]	On the seventh day of the month *Phālguna* in the year 124 (of the Gupta Era), when *paramadaivata paramabhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirāja* Śri Kumāragupta was the lold of the earth.
(vii) गुप्तान्वयानां वसुधेश्वराणां समाशते षोडशवर्षयुक्ते। कुमारगुप्ते नृपतौपृथिव्यां विराजमानेशरदीवसूर्ये ।।[6]	When Kumāragupta was ruling over the earth and shining like the sun during one hundred together with sixteen (of the era) of the lords of the earth belonging to the Gupta dynasty.

[1] *Udaigiri Cave Inscription of* Chandragupta II, Fleet: *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 25.

[2] Sanchi Stone Inscriptions of Chandragupta II, Fleet: *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 31 f.

[3] *Dhanaidaha Copper-plate Inscription of* Kumāragupta I, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVII, p. 247 ff.

[4] *Karamadanda Stone Linga Inscription of the reign of* Kumāragupta I, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. X, p. 71 f.

[5] *Damodarpur Copper-plate Inscription of* the reign of Kumāragupta I, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XV, p. 130 f.

[6] *Tumain Fragmentary Inscription of* Ghatotkachagupta, *Ind., Ant.*, Vol. XVIX, (1920), pp. 114-115.

(viii)	'संवत्सराणामधिके शतेतु त्रिंशद्भिरन्यैरपिषड्भिरेव। रात्रो दिनेप्रौष्ठपदस्य षष्ठे गुप्तप्रकाले गणनां विधाय।।'[1]	On the sixth day, at night, of the month *Prausthapada* in the year one hundred increased by thirty and also six more according to the calculation of the Gupta Kala (Era).
(ix)	संवत्सराणामधिके शतेतु त्रिंशद्भिरन्यैरपि सप्तभिश्च गुप्त-प्रकाले................ ग्रैष्मस्य मासस्य तु पूर्वपक्षे ......प्रथमेऽह्निसम्यक् ।[2]	In the year one hundred increased by thirty and seven others also of the Gupta Era......on the first day of the first half of the month *Vaisakha*
(x)	वर्षशतेऽष्टात्रिंशे गुप्तानां कालक्रम-गणिते ।[3]	In the year 138 counted according to the Gupta Era.
(xi)	श्री स्कन्दगुप्तस्याभिवर्द्धमान-विजय राज्य संवत्सरशते षच्चत्वारिंशदुत्तरतमे फाल्गुनमासे ।[4]	In the month *Phālguna* in the year one hundred followed by forty six (of the Gupta Era) during the prosperous and victorious reign of Skandagupta.
(xii)	वर्षशते गुप्तानां सचतुः पञ्चाशदुत्तरे । भूमिं रक्षति कुमारगुप्ते मासि ज्येष्ठे द्वितीयायाम् ।।[5]	On the second day of the month *Jyeṣṭha* in the year 154 of the Guptas (Gupta Era), when Kumāragupta was protecting the earth.
(xiii)	गुप्तानां समतिक्रान्ते सप्तपंचाशदुत्तरे । शते समानां पृथिवीं बुधगुप्ते प्रशासति ।। [वैशाख-मास-सप्तम्यां मूले श्यामगते ।][6]	[On the seventh day of the month *Vaiśākha*, at the time of the constellation *Mūla* belonging to the dark fortnight] when Budhagupta was ruling over the earth and one hundred years together with fifty-seven of the Guptas (Gupta Era) had elapsed.

[1] *Junagadh Inscription of* Skandagupta, Fleet: *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, pp. 58 ff.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Indor Copper-plate Inscription of* Skandagupta, Fleet: *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 70 f.

[5] *Sarnath Stone Image Inscription of* the reign of Kumāragupta II, *Arch. Sur. Ind., A.*R. 1914-15, p. 124.

[6] *Sarnath Stone Image Inscription of* the reign of Budhagupta, *Arch. Sur. Ind., A.*R. 1914-15, pp. 124-125.

(xiv) सं० १००+६०+३ आषाढ दि १०+३ परम दैवत-परमभट्टारक-महाराजाधिराज- श्रीबुध गुप्ते पृथिवी पतौ ।[1]

On the thirteenth day of the month *Āṣāḍha*, in the year 163 (of the Gupta Era), when *parama-daivataparamabhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirāja*-Śri Budhagupta was the lord of the earth.

(xv) वर्तमानाष्टाशीत्युत्तर-शत-संवत्सरे पौषमासस्य चतुर्विंशतितम दिवसे ।[2]

On the twenty-fourth day of the month *Pauṣa* in the year 188 current (of the Gupta Era).

(xvi) संवत्सरशते एकनवत्युत्तरे श्रवण-बहुलपक्ष-सप्तम्यां। संवत १००+९०+१ श्रावण- ब० दि० ७।। श्रीभानुगुप्तो जगति प्रवीरो राजा महान्पार्थसमोऽतिशूरः।।[3]

On the seventh day of the dark fortnight of the month *Śrāvaṇa* in the year 191 (of the Guptā Era), when king Śri-Bhānugupta was a great hero in the world equal to Pārtha.

(xvii) सं० १०० + ५०+९ माघ दि० ७ ।[4]

On the seventh day of the month *Māgha* in the year 150 (of the Gupta Era).

(xviii) लिखितं संवत्सरशते त्रिनवत्युत्तरे चैत्रमास दिवसे दशमे ।[5]

Written on the tenth day of the month *Chaitra* in the year one hundred together with ninety-three (of the Gupta Era).

1 *Damodarpur Copper-plate Inscription of the reign of* Budhagupta, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XV, p. 135 f.

2 *Gunaighar Copper-plate Inscription* of Vaiṇyagupta, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. VI, p. 53 ff.

3 *Eraṇa Stone Pillar Inscription of the reign of* Bhānugupta, Fleet: *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 92 f.

4 *Paharapur Copper-plate Inscription, Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XX, p. 61 ff.

5 *Khoh Copper-plate Inscription* of Sarvanāth, Fleet: *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 125 ff.

(xix)	नवोत्तरेऽब्दशतद्वये गुप्त-नृप राज्यभुक्तौ श्रीमति प्रवर्द्धमान - विजय-राज्ये महाश्वयुज-संवत्सरे चैत्र-मास - शुक्लपक्ष - त्रयोदश्यामस्यां संवत्सर मासदिवस पूर्वायां ।[1]	On the thirteenth day of the bright helf of the month *Chaitra;* in the *Mahā-Aśvayuja-Samvatsara;* in two centuries of years increased by nine; in the glorious augmenting and victorious reign; in the enjoyment of sovereignty by the Gupta kings, —on this (lunar day), (specified) as above by the year, month and day.
(xx)	वर्षे प्रथमे पृथिवीं पृथुकीर्त्तौ पृथुद्युतौ । महाराजाधिराज—श्री तोरमाणे प्रशासति ।। फाल्गुन-दिवस दशमे ।[2]	On the tenth day of the month *Phālguna*, in the first year, when the *Mahārājādhirāja* Śri-Tormāna of wide fame and glory was ruling over the earth.
(xxi)	तस्मिन्राजनि शासतिपृथिवीं पृथुविमल लोचनेऽर्तिहरे। अभिवर्द्धमान—राज्ये पञ्चदशाब्दे नृप-वृषस्य।। राशिरश्मिहास-विकसित-कुमुदोत्पन्न-गन्ध-शीतलामोदे। कार्तिकमासे प्राप्ते गगनपतौ निर्मले भाति ।। [3]	The month of *Kārtika,* cool and fragrant with the prefume of the red lillies blossomed by the smile of the rays of the moon, having come, while the spotless moon was shining, in the fifteenth year of the augmenting reign of the bull among the kings, when that king, the remover of distress and possessed of large and pellucid eyes, was governing the earth.
(xxii)	सं० २०० + ५० + २ वैशाख ब १० + ५ ।[4]	On the fifteenth day of dark fortnight of the month Vaisakha in the year 252 (of the Gupta Valabhi Era).

[1] *Khoh Copper-plate Ins.* of Saṁkṣobha, Fleet: *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 114 ff.

[2] *Erana Stone Boar Inscription* of Tormāṇa, Fleet: *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 159 ff.

[3] *Gwalior Stone Inscription* of Mihirakula, Fleet: *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 162 ff.

[4] *Maliya Copper-plate Inscription* of the Mahārāja Dharasena II, Fleet: *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, pp. 164 ff.

(xxiii) संव (संवत्) ४०० + ४० + ७ श्रे (ज्ये) ष्ठ गु (शु) ५ ॥ [1]	On the fifth day of the bright fortnight of the month *Jyeṣṭha* in the year 447 (of the Gupta-Valabhi Era).

25. *The Main Features of Dating* :

(1) A continous and regular era is used in these inscriptions except those issued under the Hūṇas. In early years the word 'Gupta' is not associated with the era.

(2) In some of the inscriptions the year of the regular era and the regnal year of the reigning king both are given.

(3) The details of dating consist of year, season, month, fortnight, date and some time constellation.

(4) The dating in eulogistic and dedicative inscriptions is detailed, metrical and poetic; but in the copper-plate grants shorter, simpler and in prose.

(5) The Hūṇa intruderrs Toramāṇa and Mihirakula used their own regnal years with other details of the Indian system of dating.

(6) There is no strict uniformity in the system of dating.

26. *The Foundations and Currency of the Gupta Era* :

The era in question has been called '*Gupta-Kāla*', '*Gupta-Prakāla*' and '*Gupta-Varṣa*'. Evidently the era was founded by some early Gupta king. In the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta the first and the second Gupta kings Śri Gupta and Ghatotkacha has been styled as mere '*mahārāja*' indicating their subordinate position, whereas the third king Chandragupta has been given the title of '*mahārājādhirāja*', showing his sovereign status. It is, therefore, inferred that the third king of the Gupta dynasty, Chandragupta I, founded the Gupta Era. The latest record of Chandragupta II, the grandson of Chandragupta I, is dated G.E. 93 and the arliest record of Kumāragupta I, the great grandson of Chandragupta

[1] *Alina Copper-plate Inscription* of Śilāditya VII, Fleet: *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 171 ff.

I, is dated G.E. 96. Under the circumstances, it can be safely maintained that Chandragupta died c. G.E. 95. Thus for the reign-periods of three kings we get 95 years, in case we hold that the reign of Chandragupta I started from G.E. 1. To some 95 years appear a bit too long a period for three reigns. But they should be reminded that three Moghal rulers Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan ruled for 102 years (1556-1658 A.D.) This fact supports the inference that it was quite possible for Chandragupta 1 to found the Gupta Era.

What is the starting point of the Gupta Era? Here Alberuni comes to our help. He writes, "And as regards the Gupta era,—(the members of this dynasty), were, it is said, a race wicked and strong; and so after they became extinct people dated by them. And it seems as if Valabhi was the last of them. And so the beginning of their era also is later than the Ṣaka era (by) 241 (years)......So, then 1488 years of the era of Śri-Harsha are in correspondence with the year (of Yazdajird) that we have taken as a gauge; and 1088 of the Vikramāditya; and 953 of the Śaka era; and 712 of the era of Valabhī, which is also the Gupta era."[1] According to the above-quoted statement the difference between the Śaka era and the Gupta era is that of 241 or (953—722) years. The Śaka was started in 78 A.D. Thus by calculation the initial year of the Gupta era was 241 plus 78=319 A.D. The year of the Gupta era starts from the first day of the bright half of the month *Chaitra* and ends on the full—moon day. In the inscriptions, the years of this era are past years; whenever they are mentioned '*vartamānā*' (current) they mean one more additional year.[2]

27. *The Valabhi Era:*

The Valabhi era was the same as the Gupta Era current in Surāṣṭra. After the end of Gupta rule there, the kings of Valabhi (capital town) adopted the Gupta era but re-named it as Valabhi era. About this era Alberuni says, "And as regards

[1] Sachau: *Alberuni's India*, Vol. II, p. 7.

[2] Ojha: *Prāchina Lipimālā*, p. 175.

the era of Valabhi,—who was the ruler of the city of Valabhi which was south of the city of Anhilvada by nearly thirty *yojanas*,—its beginning was later than the Śaka era, and substract from it the sum of the cube of six and the square of five; and there remains (the year of) the Valabhi".[1] By calculation the Valabhi era started from $78+6^3+5^2=319$ A.D., the same year from which the Gupta Era started. Hence both the eras were identical.

28. *The Inscriptions of the Vākāṭakas and their Contemporaries in the Deccan and the South.*

(1) *The Inscriptions of the Vākāṭakas;*

	Texts	*English Translation.*
(i)	सावच्छरं ३० + ७ हेमन्तपक्खं पढम दिवस ५ ।[2]	On the fifth day of the first fortnight of the season *Hemanta* (winter) in the regnal year 37 (of Vindhyaśakti II).
(ii)	संवत्सरे त्रयोदशमे (शे) लिखितमिदं शासनम् ।[3]	This grant was written in the thirteenth regnal year (of Prabhāvatiguptā).
(iii)	सेनापतौ चित्रवर्मणि संव्वत्सरेऽष्टादश १० + ८ ज्येष्ठमास शुक्लपक्ष-त्रयोदश्यां ।[4]	On the thirteenth day of the bright half of the month *Jyeṣṭha* in the regnal year 18 (of Pravarasena II), when Chitravarman was the commander-in-chief.

(2) *The Inscriptions of the Pallavas*

(i)	सवछरं दसमं १० गिम्हापखो छठो ६ दिवसं पंचमि ५ ।[5]	On the fifth day of the sixth fortnight of the season *Grīṣma* (summer) in the regnal year 10 (of Śiva-skandvarman).

[1] Sachau : *Alberuni's India*, Vol. II, p. 7.

[2] *Basin Copper-plate Inscription* of Vindhyaśakti II, *Ind. Hist. Quart.*, Vol. XVI, p. 182 ff.

[3] *Poona Copper-plate* of Prabhāvatiguptā, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XV, p. 41 ff.

[4] *Chammaka Copper-plate Inscription* of Pravarasena II, Fleet : *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 236 ff.

[5] *Mayidavolu Copper-plate Inscription* of Sivaskandavarman, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VI, p. 86 ff.

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(ii) स (स्व) विजय-राज्य-संवत्सरे चतुर्थे वैशाख-शुक्ल पंचभ्यां ।[1]	On the fifth day of the bright fortnight of the month Vaisakha in in the fourth (his own) victorious regnal year of Śiṁhavarman.

(3) *The Inscriptions of the Kadambas.*
(Not dated)

(4) *The Western Gaṅgas.*
(Not dated)

(5) *The Eastern Gaṅgas*

(i) प्रवर्द्धमान-सं० ३०+९ वैशाख दि २०+१ ।[2]	On the twenty-first day of the month *Vaiśākha* in the augmenting regnal year 39 (of Indravarman).
(ii) गाङ्गेयवङ्श (वंश) प्रवर्धमान विजयराज्य संवछर सतातृणि चतुरोतरा (संवत्सराणि त्रीणि-चतुस्तराणि) ।[3]	In the prosperous and victorious year 304 of the Gaṅga dynasty.
गाङ्गेयवङ्स (वंश) संवछ (त्स) रशतत्रयैक-पञ्चास (श)त् ।[4]	In the year 351 of the Gaṅga dynasty.

29. *The Main Features of the System of Dating :*

(1) The dynasties of the Deccan and the south dated their documents in the regnal years of their rulers; there is no use of a regular continuous era either Vikrama, Śaka or Gupta.

(2) In the details of dating they followed, naturally, the Āndhra-Śātavāhana system.

(3) The Estern Gaṅgas of Kalinga, who were more allied to the North than to the Deccan and the South were influenced by the Guptas in the style and the

[1] *Narasaraopet Copper-plate Inscription* of Siṁhavarman, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XV, p. 254 ff.

[2] *Jirjingi Copper-plate Inscription* of Indravarman, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXV, p. 286 f.

[3] *Inscription of* Anantavarmadeva, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 18.

[4] *Inscription* of Satyavarmadeva, *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XIV, p. 12.

details of dating. But they used their own Gāṅgeya Era.[1]

30. *The Inscriptions of the Maukharis and the Puṣyabhūtis.*

(i)	एकादशातिरिक्तेषु षट्सु शातितविद्विषि । शतेषु शारदां पत्यौ भुवःश्रीशानर्वमणि ॥[2]	When six hundred autumns, increased by eleven (of the Mālava-Vikrama Era) had elapsed, while the illustrious Iśānavarman, who had crushed his enemies, was the lord of the earth.
(ii)	संवत् २०+२ कार्तिक वदि १ ।[3]	On the first day of the dark fortnight of the month *Kārtika* in the regnal year 22 (of Śri-Harṣa).
(iii)	संवत् २०+५ मार्गशीर्ष वदि ६ ।[4]	On the sixth day of the dark fortnight of the month *Mārgaśīrṣa* in the year 25 (of Śri-Harṣa).
(iv)	संवत् ३०+४ प्रथम पौष शुक्लद्वितीयायाम् ।[5]	On the second day of the bright fortnight of the month first *Pauṣa* in the year 34 (of Śri-Harṣa).

31. *The Main Features of the System of Dating:*

(i) The Maukharis followed the metrical and poetic style of the Gupta system of dating.[6]

(ii) The Maukharis, however, did not adopt the Gupta Era. No name is associated with the year 611 mentioned in the Harha inscription of Īśānadeva.[7] But obviously it is neither the Śaka Era nor the Gupta Era, because

[1] The starting point of this era was 590 A.D. according to Barnet (Antiquities of India, p. 95) and c. 570 A.D. according to Ojha (*Prachina-Lipimālā*, p. 176-177). But both the dates are conjectured. The style of the first of inscriptions of this dynasty quoted above indicates that the era was founded earlier.

[2] *Harha Stone Inscription* of Iśānavarman, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIV, p. 115.

[3] *Banskhera Copper-plate Inscription of* Harṣa, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, p. 208.

[4] *Madhuban Copper-plate Inscription of* Harṣa, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. I, p. 72.

[5] Kielhorn: Inscription of Aṁśuvarman of Nepal. *The List of the Inscriptions of Northern India*, p. 73, No. 530.

[6] Only the Harha Stone Inscription of Iśānavarman (*Ep. Ind.*, Vol., XIV, p. 115) is dated. Other inscriptions of the Maukharis so far discovered are undated.

[7] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIV, p. 155.

in either case Īśanavarman will come after Harṣa, which is an impossibility. Under the circumstances the year 611 can only be referred to the Mālava Era. This is perhaps the first instance of the Mālava Era appearing almost in the once home-territory of the Guptas immediately after the end of their rule. The omission of the name Mālava is also significant. The omission marks the mysterious psychological process through which the tern 'Mālava' was converted into Vikrama.

(iii) The Puṣyabhutis were even more independent of the Guptas than the Maukharis in the matter of dating. Harṣa founded a regular era of his own; he changed the style from poetic to prosaic and cut down the combrous details of dating (see Nos. ii and iii) in his copper-plate inscriptions.

32. *The Harṣa Era :*

There is no doubt that the Haras Era was founded by Śrī Harṣa, the greatest king of the Puṣyabhūti dynasty and the last emperor of ancient India, though his name has never been found associated with this era. As regards the starting point of this era Alberuni throws a welcome light upon it. He writes that he saw in a Kashmiri calender a statement according to which Harṣa flourished later than Vikramāditya by 664 years.[1] We have no reason to doubt this statement. Thus the initial year of the Harṣa Era will be 664—57=606—7 A.D. The Harṣa Era was current in northern India and Nepal for about three hundred years before it was replaced by the Vikrama Era.

33. *Early Mediaeval Inscriptions :*

Texts	*English Translation.*
(i) संवत् १२२६(फाल्गुनवदि) षट्विंशे द्वादशगते गुरोवारे च हस्तके । वृद्धिनामनि योगेच करणे तैत्तिले तथा ॥[2]	In the year 1226 (of the Vikrama Era), month *Phālguna*, dark fortnight, Thursday, constellation *Hasta ; yoga vṛddhi, karaṇa taittila.*

[1] Sachau. *Alberum's India.*

[2] *Bijolia Inscription, A.S.J. Bengal,* Vol. LV, pp. 41-43.

(ii) संवत् ११६६ पौषवद्य १५ रवौ ।[1]	On Sunday, the 15th day of the dark fortnight of the month *Pauṣa* in the year 1166 (of the Vikrama Era).
(iii) चतुष्पंचादशाधिकशतै का दश संवत्सरे माघे मासि शुक्लपक्षे तृतीयां सोमदिने वाराणस्यामुत्तरायण संक्रान्तौ अंकत: संवत् ११५४ माघ सुदि ३ सोमे ।[2]	On Monday, the 3rd day of the bright fortnight of the month *Māgha* in the year 1154 (of the Vikrama Era) in Banaras on the occasion of *uttarāyaṇa saṁkrānti*.
(iv) संवत् ८ चन्द्रगत्या चैत्रकर्मदिने ५ ।[3]	On the fifth day of the month *Chaitra* in the year 8 (of the reign of Madanapāla).
(v) संवत् ११ वैशाखदिने १६ ।[4]	On the sixteenth day of the month of *Vaiśakh* in the year 11 (of the reign of Ballālasena).
(vi) श्रीलक्ष्मणसेनस्यातीतराज्ये सं० ५१ भाद्रदिने २९ ।[5]	On the 29th day of the month *Bhādra* in the year (past) 51 of the reign of Sri Lakṣmaṇasena.
(vii) श्रीलक्ष्मणसेनदेवपादानामतीति-राज्ये सं०७४ वैशाखवदि १२ गुरौ ।[6]	On Thursday, the 12th day of the dark fortnight of the month *Vaiśākha* in the year (past) 74 of the reign of Śrī Lakṣmaṇasena.
(viii) संवत् १२२३ वैशाखसुदि ७ गुरुवासरे ।[7]	On Thursday, the 7th day of the month *Vaiśākha* in the year 1223 (of the Vikrama Era).

[1] *Inscription of* Govindachandra, *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XVIII, p. 15.

[2] *Gahadavala Inscription.*

[3] *Inscription of* Madanapāla, *A.S.J.*, Vol. LXIX, p. 112.

[4] *Naihatti Grant of* Ballālasena, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIV, p. 159.

[5] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XII, p. 29.

[6] *Ibid.* Vol. XII, p. 30.

[7] *Semra Plates of Chandella* Paramardideva, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, p. 153.

(ix) श्री वि्क्रमकालातीत षट्- पञ्चाशदधिक-द्वादशशत संवत्सरान्तः पाति अङ्के १२५६ वैशाख सुदि १५ पौर्णमास्यां तिथौ बिशाखानक्षत्रे परिघयोगे रविदिने महावैशाख्यां पर्वणि ।[1]	On the auspicious occasion of Mahāviśākha, Sunday, *Parigha-yoga*. *Viśākha* constellation, the 15th full moon day of the bright half of the month *Vaiśākha* in the year 1256 (of the Vikrama Era) in number, (in words) when twelve hundred year increased by fifty-six of the Vikrama Era had passed.
(x) कलचुरि संवत्सरे ८९३ राजश्रीमत्पृथ्वीदेवराज्ये।[2]	During the reign of *Raja Śrimat* Pṛthvirdeva in the year 893 of the Kalachuri Era.
(xi) नवशत युगलाब्दाधिक्यगे चेदिदिष्टे जनपदमवतीमं श्रीगयाकर्णदेवे । प्रतिपदिशुचिमास- श्वेतपक्षेर्क्कवारे शिवशरणसमीपे स्थापितेयंप्रशस्तिः ॥[3]	On Sunday, the first date in the bright half of the month Śuchi (*Jyeṣtha* or *Āṣāḍha*), in the year 902 of the Chedi Era during the reign of Śri *Gayakarṇadeva*.
(xii) त्रिंशत्सु त्रिसहस्तेषु भारतादाहवादितः । सप्ताब्द शतयुक्तेषु गतेष्वब्देषु पञ्चसु ॥ पञ्चाशत्सु कलौ काले षट्सु पञ्चशतासु च । समासु समतीतासु शकानामपि भूभुजाम् ॥[4]	When thirty and three thousand five years joined with seven hundred and years, have passed since the *Bhārata* war to now, and when fifty and six and five hundred years of the Śaka kings also have gone by in the Kali age'.

[1] *Bhopal plates* of Udayavarman *Paramāra, Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XIV, p. 254-5.

[2] *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XX, p. 84.

[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. XVIII, tp. 211.

[4] *Aihole Stone Inscription of the reign of* Pulikesin II *Chālukya of Badami, Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VI, p. 1 ff verses 33-34.

(xiii)	शकनृपकालेष्ठ (ष्ट) शते चतुरुत्तरविंशदुत्तरे सम्प्रगते दुंदुभिनामति वर्षे प्रवर्तमाने जनानु रागोत्कर्षे ।[1]	When the time of the Śaka king consisting of eight hundred and twentyfour years has gone by, while the year named *duṁdubhi*, which overflows with kindness to mankind, is current.
(xiv)	शकनृपकालातीत संवत्सरशतेषु नवसु षट्चत्वारिंशदधिकेषु अंकतः संवत् ९४६ राक्षसी संवत्सरान्तर्गत वैशाख पौर्णमास्यामादत्यवारे[2]	On Sunday, the full moon day of the month *Vaiśākha* in the year (namely *Rākṣasi*) 946 (of the Śaka Era) in fiigures, (in words) when nine hundred years increased by fortysix of the Śaka king had passed.
(xv)	श्री मच्चालुक्यविक्रमकालद १२ नेय प्रभवसंवत्सरद० ।[3]	In the year 12, *prabhava* by name, of the Chalukyavikrama Era.
(xvi)	श्री वीरविक्रमकालनामधेय संवत्सरैक विंशति प्रमितेष्वतीतेषु वर्तमान धातु संवत्सरे ।[4]	In the year 21, *Kāla* by name, of the Vira-Vikrama Era.
(xvii)	कशे (शके) १६०७ मार्गशिरवदि अष्टमी मघानक्षत्रे सोमदिने··· नेपाल सम्वत् ८०६ ।[5]	On Sunday, *Maghā* constellation, eighth day of the dark fortnight of the month Mārgaśirṣa, in the year 1607 of the Śaka Era (equal to the year 806 of the Nepal Era.

34. *The Main Features of the System of Dating:*

(i) Gradually the Vikrama Era became current and popular in northern India mostly due to the expansion of the ruling dynasties from Madhya Bharata

[1] *Mulgund Ins. of* Kṛṣṇa II, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XII, p. 192.

[2] *Miria plates of* Jayasiṁha *Chālukya of Kalyana, Ind. Ant.*, Vol. VIII, p. 187.

[3] *J.A.S. B B*, Vol. X, p. 290.

[4] *Ibid*, Vol. X, p. 197.

[5] Haraprasad Sastri, *Catalogue of Palm-leaf and selected paper MSS belonging to the Durbar Library*, Nepal.

and Rajasthana to that area; the Śvetambara Jains carried it to Surāṣtra and popularised it elsewhere also; after the fall of the Śakas at Ujjayini, the Śaka Era lost its hold in the north and Kṛta-Mālava Era renamed as the Vikrama Era regained its prestige and when it was adopted by the astronomers and astrologers it became almost universal in the north.

(ii) The Harṣa Era,[1] the Newar Era,[2] the Traikuṭaka, the Kalachuri or the Chedi Era[3] and the Lakṣmaṇa-sena Era[4] which were started or adopted during this period had almost local currency and could not survive long. The first three were replaced by the Vikrama Era and the last one by Fasli Era introduced by the Muslims in Bengal which later on was termed as Bengali Era (Vaṅgābda).

(iii) The Śaka Era, the centre and home of which was Avanti, but which was once used by the Kṣaharātas of Mahārāṣtra, travelled towards the Deccan and the South, though some of the dynasties still preferred their regnal years to any regular era; but slowly the Śaka Era gained ground through the astrologers of the Ujjayini school and also due to the association of the name of Śālivāhana with it later on.

(iv) With the Śaka Era, the Kali Era was also in some cases used.[5] The latter was counted from vernal equinox of 3101 B.C. The era was first made known by Āryabhaṭṭa *Sūryasiddhānta*, iii, 10) in the fifth century A.D. The cycle of *Bṛhaspati* also came to be used.

[1] See section 32 of this chapter.

[2] The era was started from Oct. 20, 879 A.D.; see Kielhorn, *Ind., Ant.* Vol. XVII, p. 246 and Ojha, *Prāchina-lipimālā*, p. 181-182.

[3] According to Kielhorn this era started from August t26, 249 A.D. (*Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XVII, p. 299).

[4] Various starting years of this era were used. Kielhorn worked out Oct. 7, 1179 A.D. as the initial point (*Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XIX, p. 6).

[5] *Aihole Stone Inscription of the reign of* Pulikeśin, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VI, p. 1 ff.

(v) The Chālukya Vikrama Era[1] and the Kollama Era[2] were started in the Deccan and the South respectively but they did not gain currency and popularity.

(vi) There is no uniformity regarding the actual system of dating:

(*a*) Dating is both in verse and prose as required by the document.

(*b*) The years are mentioned often in words and figures both and sometimes in figures only.

(*c*) In elaborate dating year, month, fortnight, date, day, constellation, *yoga* etc. are given; in a few inscriptions parvas are also mentioned.

(*d*) In simpler dating only years are given.

(*e*) In many cases the dates are expressed not in figures or common words but through significant symbolic words; it was a peculiar device of Indian astrologers.

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[1] Vikramāditya VI, the later Chālukya ruler of Kalyani started this era in 1075-76 A.D. (Ojha: *Prāchina-lipimālā*, p. 181-2). It lasted for about 100 years.

[2] This era was started in 824-25 in order to commemorate some event connected with Kollama, a town on the western coast of Travanacore. The era had a very restricted currency, but it is still persisting in Malabar. (*Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XXV, p. 54).

(1) [illegible] Cākyār [illegible] Vilambi [illegible] Kolkkali [illegible] were shown in [illegible] but they did [illegible] and popularity.

(2) There is no [illegible] system of dance.

(3) Dance is [illegible] and [illegible] as required by the [illegible].

(4) The [illegible] words and [illegible] only.

(5) In elaborate dance [illegible] date [illegible] given [illegible] a few [illegible].

(6) In [illegible] words [illegible] devices of [illegible] astrologers.

[illegible]

[illegible]

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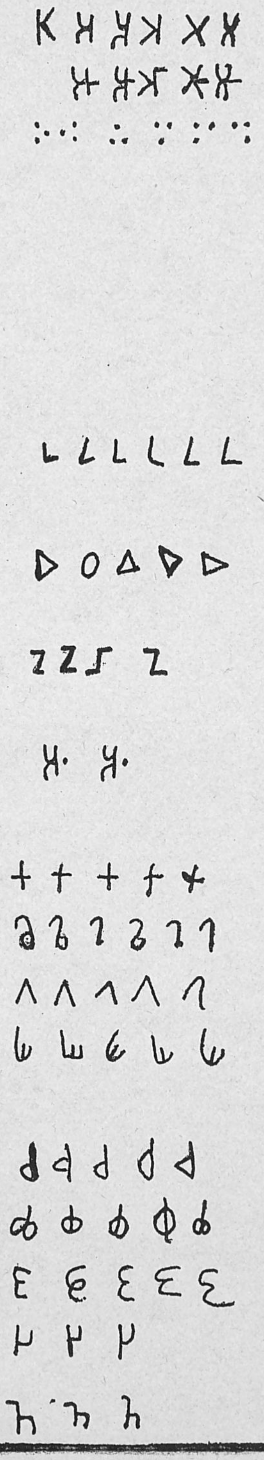
Table No. I—Indus Valley Script (p. 24)

Table No. II—Early Brāhmī Script (p. 34).

	Nāgarī	Roman	Brāhmī	Nāgarī	Roman	Brāhmī
1	अ	a		ट	ṭa	
2	आ	ā		ठ	ṭha	
3	इ	i		ड	ḍa	
4	ई	ī		ढ	ḍha	
5	ऋ	ṛ		ण	ṇa	
6	ॠ	ṝ		त	ta	
7	ऌ	ḷ		थ	tha	
8	ॡ	ḹ		द	da	
9	उ	u		ध	dha	
10	ऊ	ū		न	na	
11	ए	e		प	pa	
12	ऐ	ai		फ	pha	
13	ओ	o		ब	ba	
14	औ	au		भ	bha	
15	अं	aṁ		म	ma	
16	अः	aḥ		य	ya	
17	क	ka		र	ra	
18	ख	kha		ल	la	
19	ग	ga		व	va	
20	घ	gha		श	śa	
21	ङ	ṅa		ष	ṣa	
22	च	ca		स	sa	
23	छ	cha		ह	ha	
24	ज	ja		क्ष	kṣa	
25	झ	jha		त्र	tra	
26	ञ	ña		ज्ञ	jña	



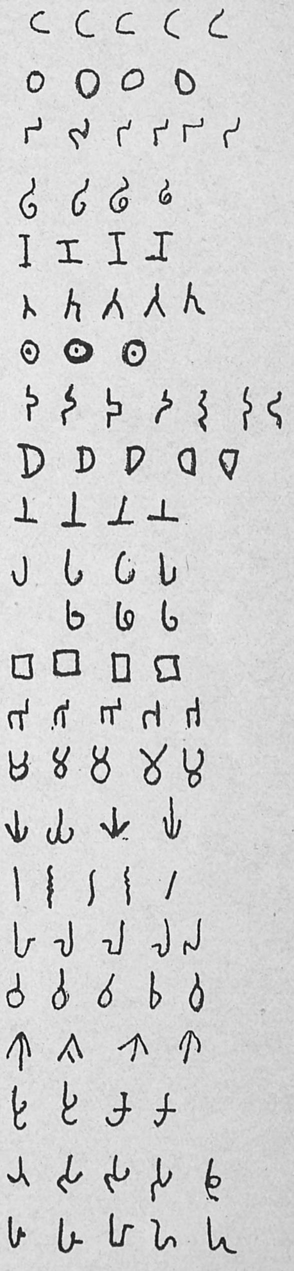


Table No. III—Comparison between Aramaic and Brāhmī (p. 43)

S.N.	Name & Phonetic Value[1]	Aramaic Characters	Brāhmī Characters
1	अलेफ् (अ)		
2	बेथ (ब)		
3	गिमेल (ग)		
4	दालेथ (द		
5	हे (ह)		
6	वाव् (व)		
7	जाइन (ज़)		
8	हेथ (ह)		
9	तेथ (त)[2]		
10	योध (य)		
11	काफ् (क)		
12	लामेध (ल)		
13	मेम (म)		
14	नून (न)		
15	सामेख (स)		
16	आइन् (ए)		
17	पे (प)		
18	त्साधे (स)		
19	क़ॉफ् (क़)		
20	रेश (र)		
21	शिन् (श)		
22	ताव् (त)		

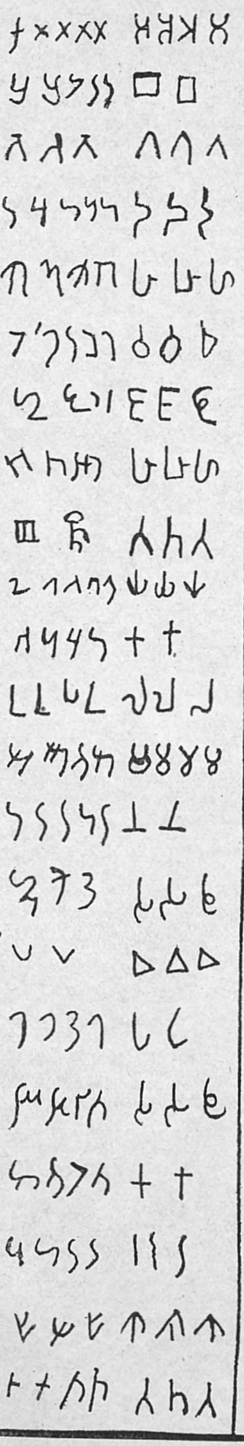


Table No. IV—Forced derivation of Brāhmī (p. 45)

S.N.	Roman	Phonetic Value	Brāhmī	Phonetic Value
1	A	a	Λ	ga
2	D	ḍa	D	dha
3	E	i, e	E	ja
4	I	i	|	ra
5	J	ja	J	la
6	L	la	L	u
7	O	o	O	ṭha
8	U	u	U	pa
9	X	ksa	+	ka
10	Z	za	Z	o
	Arabic			
1	1	a	|	ra
2	Ɛ	a	E	ja
3	b	ta	b	va

[1] In the Nagari characters.

[2] Taken from the Sabian.

Table No. V—Derivation of Brāhmī from Indus Valley Script (p.50)

S N	Phonetic Value	Brāhmī	Indus Valley Script.[1]
1	a		
2	i		
3	ī		
4	o		
5	ka		
6	ga		
7	gha		
8	cha		
9	ja		
10	ṭa		
11	ta		
12	tha		
13	pa		
14	ba		
15	ma		
16	ya		
17	ra		
18	la		
19	va		
20	vu		
21	e		
22	dha		
23	na		
24			
25			
26			

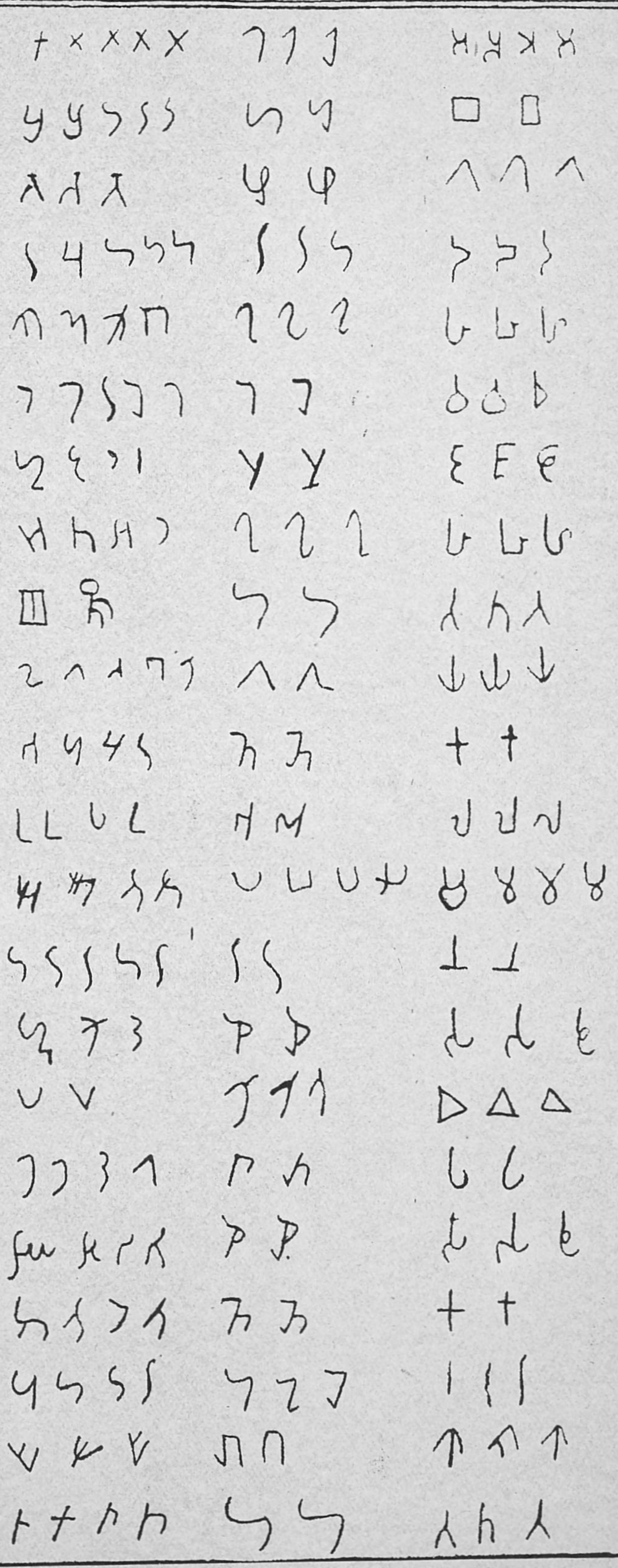
Table No. VI—Kharoṣṭhī Script (p. 50)

Nāgari	Roman	Kharoṣṭhī	Nāgari	Roman	Kharoṣṭhī
अ	a		ट	ṭa	
आ	â		ठ	ṭha	
इ	i		ड	ḍa	
ई	ī		ढ	ḍha	
ऋ	ṛ		ण	ṇa	
ॠ	ṝ		त	ta	
ऌ	ḷ		थ	tha	
ॡ	ḹ		द	da	
उ	u		ध	dha	
ऊ	ū		न	na	
ए	e		प	pa	
ऐ	ai		फ	pha	
ओ	o		ब	ba	
औ	au		भ	bha	
अं	aṁ		म	ma	
अः	aḥ		य	ya	
क	ka		र	ra	
ख	kha		ल	la	
ग	ga		व	va	
घ	gha		श	śa	
ङ	ṅa		ष	ṣa	
च	ca		स	sa	
छ	cha		ह	ha	
ज	ja		क्ष	kṣa	
झ	jha		त्र	tra	
ञ	ña		ज्ञ	jña	

1 Phonetic values not yet determined.

Table No. VII—Comparison between Aramaic, Kharoṣṭhī, and Brāhmī (pp. 52-56).

SN	Names & Phonentic Values[1] of Aramaic Characters	Aramaic	Kharoṣṭhī	Brāhmī
1	अलेफ् (अ)			
2	बेथ् (ब)			
3	गिमेल (ग)			
4	दालेथ् (द)			
5	हे (ह)			
6	वाव् (व)			
7	जाइन् (ज)			
8	हेथ् (ह)			
9	तेथ् (त)[2]			
10	योध् (य)			
11	काफ् (क)			
12	लामेध (ल)			
13	मेम् (म)			
14	नून् (न)			
15	सामेख् (स)			
16	आइन् (ए)			
17	पे (प)			
18	त्साधे (स)			
19	क़ॉफ् (क़)			
20	रेश (र)			
21	शिन् (श)			
22	ताव (त)			



[1] In the Nāgarī Characters.

ERRATA

Page	Para	Line	Incorrect	Correct
12	2	6	Sakalya	Śākalya
12	5	1	Araṇyaka	Āraṇyakas
13	2	8	was	were
14	2	17	Mūhurtas	Muhūrtās
27	15/2		Serpants	serpents
34	2	9	euphamism	euphemism
34	footnote no. 2		envention	invention
39	2	4	belive	believe
41	3	1	champions	champion
53	last	5	resembalance	resemblance
56	2	4	nicname	nickname
57	1	4	upsurage	upsurge
58	1	14	mabe	made
61	2	8	world	word
65	1	4	oblative	ablative
66	3	1	brick-bark	birch-bark
66	1	5	natnre	nature
68	1	1	earliaest	earliest
69	2	2	belong	belongs
69	2	5	praiña-pāramitā	prajñā-pāramitā
70	2	4	write	writer
73	1	8	decla va ion	declaration
74	2	4	Vāsavodattā	Vāsavadattā
76	last	1	Mesopetamia	Mesopotamia
84	2	3	indeliable	indelible
85	3	1	writting	writing
88	1	5	fingures	fingers
90	1	3	Sassamians	Sassanians
90	footnote	4	पडिय माना:	पीडचमाना:
98	1	4	criterian	criterion
99	2	17	Valle	Valley
106	(viii)	2	conrtain	contain
107	1	2	seeond	second
112	11	8	require	requires
117	1	14	respect	respects
121	1	5	eyses	eyes
121	1	6	attrac-tive	attractive
126	5	1	know	known

Page	Para	Line	Incorrect	Correct
134	1	1	tthe	the
136	foot-note	1	हेलियो यो दोरेण	हेलियोदोरेण
139	2	5	ksaharata	Kṣaharāta
141	(v)(b)		accruig	accruing
142	1	2	Sākhās	Śākhās
143	1	2	which records	records
143	3	2	Silāhāras	Śilāhāras
147	2	5	instance	instances
149	2	5	contain	contains
152	3	5	benediction	benedictions
157	4	1	tenunciation	renunciation
159	1	3	accure	accrue
159	footnote 3		प्रायण	प्रायेण
162	2	1	meriotirous	meritorious
162	4	5	neither	nether
163	footnote 4		हरेत	हरेत्
163	footnote 4		किल्विशम्	किल्वषम्
165	1	1	concious	conscious
171	3	2	Sāndhi-Vigarahika	Sāndhi-Vigrahika
173	footnote 6		प्राणिधाय	प्रणिधाय
175	3	3	othe	other
175	2	5	Kālidasa	Kālidāsa
175	2	7	sectariam	sectarian
175	2	10	accords	records
177	3	2	has	have
178	1	4	exracts	extracts
180	2	9	years	year
181	(v)	4	twenty-forth	twentyfourth
182	(1)	2	Mauryra	Maurya
182	8 (sub-head)		Kāravela	Khāravela
184	footnote 1		Nahapana	Nahapāna
186	1	16	Raia	Rājā
186	1	20	Chāṣṭana	Chaṣṭaṇa
188	3	1	inscription	inscriptions
189	(v)	2	Śrāvāṇa	Śrāvaṇa
192	1	2	area	era
193	(iv)	2	Aṣāḍha	Āṣāḍha
194	(x)	3	Bhadrapada	Bhādrapada
197	13	2	Phalguna	Phālguna
197	23 (sub-head)	2	emiennt	eminent
198	1	4	Vikramādity	Vikramāditya

Page	Para	Line	Incorrect	Correct
204	(viii)	5	Kala	Kāla
205	(xvi)	3	Guptā Era	Gupta Era
207	26 (sub-head)	5	has	have
207	26 (sub-head)	11	arliest	earliest
210	1	2	Vaisakha	Vaiśākha
212	1	1	Īśanavarman	Īśānavarman
212	footnote	2	A. S. J. Bengal	J. A. S. Bengal
213	(viii)	1	Thurday	Thursday
214	(ix)	3	Viśakha	Viśākhā
214	(x)	2	Pṛthvirdeva	Pṛthvideva
215	(xiii)	3	नामति	नामनि
215	(xiv)	6	मादत्य	मादित्य
216	1	1	Śvetambara	Śvetāmbara